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# THE CRITICISM
OF
# THE FOURTH GOSPEL

EIGHT LECTURES ON THE MORSE FOUNDATION, DELIVERED IN THE UNION SEMINARY, NEW YORK IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, 1904

BY

WILLIAM SANDAY, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D.

LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR, AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD
HON. FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE; FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY
CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE KING

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TO

MY AMERICAN FRIENDS

# PREFACE

THESE lectures were delivered in accordance with the terms of the Morse foundation in the Union Theological Seminary, New York, between October 12 and November 4, 1904; and they were afterwards repeated, with some changes, in Oxford. I have tried to improve their form both while they were being delivered and since. But I have been content to state the case for the most part broadly and constructively, and have not (as I had at one time intended) burdened the pages with notes and detailed discussions.

I am conscious of inadequate treatment throughout, but especially perhaps in Lecture VII. There has been a movement of thought going on ever since the lectures were begun; and, if I am not mistaken, the burning point of the whole controversy has come to rest more and more upon the question discussed in this lecture. But on neither side has the real issue been pressed home with any thoroughness. Critical writers are in the habit of assuming with very little proof that the theology of St. John is simply a development of that of St. Paul, and that the theology of St. Paul was from one end to the other the Apostle's own creation. I cannot think that this is a true representation of the facts; it seems to me to ignore far too much the Mother Church and that which gave its life to the Mother Church. At the

same time I am quite aware that what I have given is rather a sketch for a possible answer to this question, than a really satisfactory discussion of it. There are not wanting signs that a fuller examination of the relations between the teaching of Christ on the one hand and St. Paul and St. John on the other is the next great debate that lies before us. In this debate the question of the genuineness and authenticity of the Fourth Gospel will be but an episode.

It is a matter of regret to me that the subject of these lectures should have been so predominantly controversial. I cannot help feeling the deep cleft which divides me from many of the writers whose views I have discussed—a cleft that extends to matters more fundamental still than the criticism of the Gospel. I find it in some ways a relief to think of the division between us as greater even than it is. Where there is frank and open hostility, the approaches that are made by the one side to the other are more highly valued. And from this point of view there is much in the writings of those of whom I am obliged to think as opponents that greatly appeals to me. As typical of this I may mention the pamphlet by Freiherr von Soden entitled *Die wichtigsten Fragen im Leben Jesu.* I have referred to this pamphlet in a note on p. 129, in terms that are not those of praise; and it true that the critical portion of the pamphlet, especially so far as it deals with the Fourth Gospel, seems to me very defective. I also cannot

disguise from myself that the author explicitly denies what I should most wish that he affirmed (op. cit., p. 92). But, when I have said this, it is only just to add that I have read the concluding sections of his essay with warm respect and admiration. And what is true of this essay is true of much beside.

I console myself by thinking that German criticism with which I have had to break a lance more often than with any other, has a wonderful faculty for correcting itself. Only in the last few years we have had, first the discussions started by Wellhausen about the title Son of Man, and then those set on foot by Wrede in his book *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, and in each case criticism seems to be working its way through to a view that is really right and reasonable. In like manner the extravagant estimate of the apocalyptic element in the Gospels which has been in vogue in recent years seems to be reducing itself to sounder dimensions. In each case there is error; but in each case the error is corrected, and something is learnt and gained by the way. May we not hope that on this question of the Fourth Gospel, and the still more vital matters with which it is bound up, by degrees the tension may be relaxed, and there may be the same experience of permanent gain? Already one may see great potentialities of good in much that as it at present stands may well give cause for concern.

One common form of criticism that may be directed

against this book I confess that I should rather deprecate. Even my friend Dr. Cheyne, whose sympathies are so large, allows himself to write: 'Apologetic considerations are brought in to limit our freedom. The Fourth Gospel must be the work of the Apostle John, and must be in the main historical, because the inherited orthodoxy requires it' (*Bible Problems*, p. 40 f.). Does he really think that this is our only reason for holding those paradoxical positions? Or rather, I would put my question in another way; Does he really think that 'the inherited orthodoxy' is nothing better than a taskmaster that stands over us with a whip, to keep us from straying? Is that his view of the divine meaning in the history and development of nineteen centuries? I have had occasion incidentally to define my attitude on this subject, and I may perhaps refer to the pages on which I have done so (pp. 3–5; comp. pp. 233–235; 262 f.). I hope that this attitude is at least as consistent with an earnest pursuit of truth as that which appears to assume that orthodox or traditional opinions are always wrong.

Again, I am not conscious of that 'paralyzing dread of new facts' of which my friend speaks. It may be true that new theories perhaps, rather than new facts, have a greater attraction for some of us than for others. But, as far as I am concerned, if I have been silent in public on some of the no doubt important questions raised, the cause has been chiefly

want of time. Life is very short, and very crowded, and we are not all rapid workers, or gifted with the power of facing in many directions at once. And yet I have tried to keep pace with the progress of thought; the problems which Dr. Cheyne propounds are not unfamiliar to me; and I am not without more or less deliberate views about them. Dr. Cheyne's book is enough to convince me that the problems are really urgent; and I shall do my best to say what I have to say upon them as soon as I can.

Perhaps it should be explained that the enumeration of books and writers does not profess to be exhaustive. In the main I have confined myself to the more recent, and to what may be called 'living' literature. Some few things may have dropped out because they did not happen to fall in with the method of treatment adopted. Of these the various writings of Dr. Edwin A. Abbott are the most important that I can remember. To the older works mentioned on pp. 12–15 there should have been added Archdeacon Watkin's Bampton Lectures for 1890 as a summary of earlier criticism. The absence of reference to the elaborate work of Dr. Joh. Kreyenbühl (*Das Evangelium der Wahrheit*, vol. i, 1900; vol. ii, 1905) is due in part to the accidental loss of my copy of the first volume. But it would be wrong to suggest that I should have had patience enough to discover what there is of sanity in its learned but fantastic pages.

It only remains for me to express my heartfelt thanks to those who so kindly invited me to deliver these lectures, and to those who gave me such generous and considerate hospitality, while they were being delivered. My visit to America was deeply interesting to me. I returned home, not only with the feeling that I had made new and valued friends, but also with a greatly strengthened hope and desire that American and English workers may long be found side by side—not as though either of them had already obtained, or were already made perfect, but pressing on, if so be that they may apprehend that for which also they were apprehended by Christ Jesus.

I must also add a word of very sincere thanks to my friends Dr. Lock, who read the whole, and Mr. Ll. J. M. Bebb, who read a part of the proofs of these lectures, and to whose kindness and care I owe it that they are not more faulty than they are.

OXFORD. *Easter*, 1905.

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# THE CRITICISM OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

# LECTURE I

## SURVEY OF RECENT LITERATURE

### *The Situation in November*, 1903.

THE subject of these lectures illustrates in a striking way the fluctuations and vicissitudes of critical opinion as presented before the public. The facts remain the same, and the balance of essential truth and error in regard to them also remains the same; but the balance of published opinion is a different matter, and in regard to this the changes are often very marked and very rapid.

In November last (1903), when I definitely accepted the invitation so kindly given me by your President, and definitely proposed the subject on which I am about to speak, the criticism of the Fourth Gospel had reached a point which, in my opinion, was further removed from truth and reality than at any period within my recollection. There had followed one another in quick succession four books—or what were practically books—three at least of which were of conspicuous ability, and yet all as it seemed to me seriously wrong both in their conclusions and in their methods. To the year 1901 belong the third and fourth editions, published together, of the justly praised and largely circulated *Introduction to the New Testament* of Professor Jülicher of Marburg (now translated into English by the accomplished daughter of Mrs. Humphry Ward), the second volume of *Encyclopaedia*

*Biblica*, containing a massive article on 'John, Son of Zebedee,' by Professor P. W. Schmiedel of Zürich, and a monograph on the Fourth Gospel by M. Jean Réville of Paris.[1] To these was added in the autumn of last year a complete commentary on the Gospel by the Abbé Loisy, whose more popular writings were at the time attracting so much attention. A profound dissent from the conclusion arrived at in these works was one of my main reasons in offering to discuss the subject before you. The feeling was strong within me that in this portion of the critical field—and I do not know any other so vital—the time was one of trouble and rebuke; that there was a call to me to speak; and that, however inadequate the response to the call might be, some response ought to be attempted.

These were the motives present to my mind in the month of November when I chose my subject. But by the beginning of the year (1904) the position of things by which they had been prompted was very largely changed. The urgency was no longer nearly so great. Two books had appeared, both in the English tongue, which did better than I could hope to do the very thing that I desired—one more limited, the other more extended in its scope, but both maintaining what I believe to be the right cause in what I believe to be the right way. These books

[1] It is this last work that I consider an exception to the high standard of ability in the group of which I am speaking. It is absolutely one-sided. I do not doubt the writer's sincerity, but he is blissfully unconscious that there is another side to the argument.

were *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Part I, by Professor V. H. Stanton of Cambridge, and *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* by Dr. James Drummond, Principal of Manchester College. I should be well content to rest the case, as I should wish it to be stated, on these two books, especially the second. But by the time when they appeared I was already committed to my task. As I have said, one of them is limited in its scope; and the other—admirable as it is, and heartily as I agree with its principles as well as with most of its details—is perhaps not quite so complete on all points as it is on some; so that there may still be room for such a brief course of lectures as you ask of me, partly to reinforce points already made, and partly, it may be, in some small degree to supplement them.

What I have been saying amounts to a confession that my purpose is apologetic. I propose to defend the traditional view, or (as an alternative) something so near to the traditional view that it will count as the same thing. It is better to be clear on this point at starting. And yet I know that there are many minds—and those just the minds to which I should most like to appeal—to which this will seem to be a real drawback. There is an impression abroad—a very natural impression—that 'apologetic' is opposed to 'scientific.'

In regard to this there are just one or two things that I would ask leave to say.

(1) We are all really apologists, in the sense that for all of us some conclusions are more acceptable

than others. No one undertakes to write on any subject with his mind in the state of a sheet of white paper. We all start with a number of general principles and general beliefs, conscious or unconscious, fixed or provisional. We all naturally give a preference to that which harmonizes best with these beliefs, though all the time a process of adjustment may be going on, by which we assimilate larger conclusions to smaller as well as smaller to larger.

(2) Even in the strictest science it must not be supposed that the evidence will always point the same way. The *prima facie* conclusion will not always be necessarily the right one. It cannot be, because it is very possible that it may conflict with some other conclusion that is already well established. A balance has to be struck, and some adjustment has to be attempted.

(3) If I defend a traditional statement as to a plain matter of fact, I am the more ready to do so because I have found—or seemed to myself to find—as a matter of experience, that such statements are far more often, in the main, right than wrong. It is a satisfaction to me to think that in this experience, so far as it relates to the first two centuries of Christian history, I have the distinguished support of Professor Harnack, who has expressed a deliberate opinion to this effect, though he certainly did not start with any prejudice in favour of tradition. Of course one sits loosely to a generalization like this. It only means that the burden of proof lies with those who reject such a statement rather than with those who accept it.

(4) I cannot but believe that there is a real presumption that the Christian faith, which has played so vast a power in what appear to be the designs of the Power that rules the world, is not based upon a series of deceptions. I consider that, on any of the large questions, that view is preferable which does not involve an abrupt break with the past. It is very likely that there may be involved some modification or restatement, but not complete denial or reversal.

To say this is something more than the instinct of continuity—something more than the instinct expressed in such words as—

> 'I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.'

It is the settled belief that there is a Providence that shapes our ends, and that this Providence never has wholly to undo its own work, but that there is a continuous purpose running through the ages.

That is the sense—and I do not think more than that—in which I plead guilty to being an apologist. I hope there is such a thing as 'scientific apology' or 'apologetic science,' and that this is entitled to fair consideration along with other kinds of science. I would not for a moment ask that anything I may urge should be judged otherwise than strictly on its merits.

I began by saying that the nearer past, the last three or four years, has been distinguished by the successive appearance of a number of prominent books on the criticism of the Fourth Gospel, which have been

all on the negative side. Those I mentioned are not only negative, but they have taken the more extreme form of negation. Not content with denying that the author of the Gospel was the Apostle St. John, they insist at once that the true author is entirely unknown, and that whoever he was he stood in no direct relation to the Apostle. It has been the special characteristic of the last few years, as compared with the preceding period, that this more extreme position has been held by writers of note and influence. If we take the period from 1889 to 1900—or even if we go further back, say, from 1870 to 1900, the dominant tendency had been different. Opinion had seemed to gravitate more and more towards a sort of middle position, in which the two sides in the debate could almost reach hands to each other. There was a distinct recognition on the critical side of an element in the Gospel of genuine and authentic history. And, on the other hand, there was an equally clear recognition among conservative writers that the discourses of our Lord in particular were reported with a certain amount of freedom, not as they had been actually spoken but as they came back to the memory of the Apostle after a considerable lapse of time. While the critics could not bring themselves to accept the composition of the Gospel by the son of Zebedee himself, they seemed increasingly disposed to admit that it might be the work of a near disciple of the Apostle, such as the supposed second John, commonly known as 'the Presbyter.'

If this was the state of things six or seven years

ago, and if this description might be given of the general tendency of research in the decade or two preceding, the same can be said no longer. The threads that seemed to be drawing together have again sprung asunder. The sharp antitheses, that seemed in the way to be softened down and harmonized, have asserted themselves again in all their old abruptness. The alternatives are once more not so much between stricter and less strict history as between history and downright fiction, not so much between the Apostle and a disciple or younger contemporary of the Apostle as between a member of the Apostolic generation and one who was in no connexion with it.

I am speaking of the more pronounced opinions on either side. Whereas seven or eight or fifteen or twenty years ago the most prominent scholars were working towards conciliation, at the present time, and in the near past, the most strongly expressed opinions have been the most extreme. The old authorities, happily for the most part, still remain upon the scene, and they have not withdrawn the views which they had expressed; but other, younger writers have come to the front, and they have not shown the same disposition for compromise. They know their own minds, and they are ready enough to proclaim them without hesitation and without reserve.

The consequence is that the situation, as we look out upon it, presents more variety than it did. There are many shades of opinion, some of them strongly opposed to each other. It is no longer possible to

strike an average, or to speak of a general tendency. The only thing to be done is for each of us to state his view of the case as he sees it, and to appeal to the public, to the jury of plain men, and to the rising generation, to decide between the competing theories.

### 1. *Conservative Opinion.*

It must not be thought that conservative scholars have shown any weakening of confidence in their cause. Quite the contrary. The latest period, which has seen so much recrudescence of opposition, has also seen not only the old positions maintained by those who had maintained them before, but an important accession to the literature on the Fourth Gospel—from the hand of a veteran indeed, but a veteran who had not before treated the subject quite directly. I refer to Zahn's monumental *Introduction to the New Testament*, 2 vols., published in 1899, with which may be taken vol. vi of the same writer's *Forschungen z. Gesch. d. neutest. Kanons* published in 1900. It is no disparagement to other workers in the field of Early Christian Literature to say that Dr. Zahn is the most learned of them all. We could indeed count upon our fingers several who know all that really needs to be known; but Dr. Zahn has a singular command of the whole of this material in its remotest recesses. He keeps a keen eye not only on theological literature proper, but on everything that appears in the world of scholarship that might have any bearing upon the questions at issue. An indefatigable industry he shares with more than one of his col-

leagues; but he is surpassed by none in the vigour and energy of mind with which he works up his knowledge.

And yet, with all his masterly erudition, and imposing as is the monument which he has erected of it, I am afraid that I should have to call it in some ways a rather isolated monument. There is something in Dr. Zahn's work and in his position that is rather solitary. He has indeed his *fidus Achates* in Professor Haussleiter of Greifswald, and I do not doubt that his influence is widely felt among theologians of the Right. It is an encouragement to all who are like-minded to know that this strong tower of learning and character is with them. But it is hardly to be expected that Dr. Zahn's writings, especially his greater writings, should ever be popular. Those closely packed pages, with long unbroken paragraphs and few helps to the eye and to readiness of apprehension, are a severe exercise for the most determined student: to any one else they must be forbidding. And when such a student has made his way into them, he is apt to find in them every quality but one. The views expressed on all points, larger and smaller, testify unfailingly to the powers of mind that lie behind them, but the one thing that they do often fail to do is to convince. There has fallen upon the shoulders of Dr. Zahn too much of the mantle of von Hofmann: if he were a little less original, he would carry the reader with him more.

Another veteran scholar, who has continued his laborious and unresting work upon the Fourth Gospel

during this period, Dr. Bernhard Weiss[1], suffers less from this cause. Not that the writings of Dr. Weiss are much easier (they are a little easier) or more attractive in outward form. But one has a feeling that the Berlin Professor is more in the main stream—that he is more in touch with other opinion on the right hand and on the left. For this reason one finds him, on the whole, more helpful. Every question, as it arises, is thoughtfully weighed, and a strong judgement is brought to bear upon it. Each edition of Dr. Weiss' books is conscientiously revised and brought, so far as can be reasonably expected, up to date. This untiring worker, as he enters upon the decline of a long life, has the satisfaction of looking back upon a series of volumes, always sound and always sober, which have contributed as much as any in this generation to train up in good and wholesome ways those who are to follow. Dr. Weiss' work upon the Fourth Gospel is distinguished at once by his steady maintenance of the Apostolic authorship and by his steady insistence on the necessity of allowing for a certain freedom of handling. This freedom in the treatment, more particularly of the discourses, Dr. Weiss was practically the first writer to assert on the conservative side. He has sometimes stated it in a way that I cannot but think rather exaggerated.

Along with Bernhard Weiss it is natural to name Dr. Willibald Beyschlag, of whose dignified conduct of the proceedings at the Halle Tercentenary reports

[1] *Einleitung in d. N. T.*, 3rd ed., 1897; *Das Johannes-Evangelium*, 9th ed. (4th of those undertaken by Dr. Weiss), 1892.

reached us in England, followed—as it seemed, too soon—by the news of his death on Nov. 25, 1900. Beyschlag was a good average representative of the liberal wing of the defenders of the Fourth Gospel, who also combine its data with those of the Synoptics in reconstructing the Life of our Lord. His style has more rhetorical ease and flow than that of Weiss, and he states his views with confidence and vigour; but one feels that in his hands problems are apt to become less difficult than they really are. For a reasonable middle position, a compromise between extremes on both sides, we may go to Beyschlag as well as to any one; but it may be doubted whether he really sounds the depths of the Gospel [1].

In this respect writers like Luthardt (died Sept. 21, 1902) and Godet (died Oct. 29, 1900), who are nearer to the old-fashioned orthodoxy, are more satisfactory. Of these writers we have fairly recent editions: Luthardt's *Kurzgefasster Kommentar* came out in a second edition in 1894, and a posthumous edition of Godet's elaborate and weighty work began to appear in 1902. With such books as these we may group the reprint of the commentary by Drs. Milligan and Moulton (Edinburgh, n. d.) and the two commentaries, in *The Expositor's Bible* (1891–2) and in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1897, by Dr. Marcus Dods.

[1] For Beyschlag's treatment of the Fourth Gospel see *Zur johanneischen Frage*, reprinted from *Theol. Studien und Kritiken* (Gotha, 1876); *Neutest. Theologie* (Halle a. S., 1891), i. 212–19; *Leben Jesu* (3rd ed., Halle, 1893).

In the same connexion may also be mentioned a little group of French writings, headed by *Six Leçons sur les Évangiles* (Paris, 1897), by Abbé (now Monsignor) Pierre Batiffol—slight, but with a note of real distinction both in style and matter; an Introduction by Abbé Jacquier (*Histoire des Livres du N. T.*, Paris, 1903), and a commentary by Père Calmes (Paris and Rome, 1904)—both (as it would seem) sufficiently competent and modern but not specially remarkable.

Besides these there are three works on the conservative side which English-speaking readers at least can never forget—the searching examination of the external evidence by Dr. Ezra Abbot (Boston, 1880, reprinted in *Critical Essays*, 1888); articles in *The Expositor* for the early months of 1890 by Bp. Lightfoot (reprinted with other matter bearing upon the subject in *Biblical Essays*, 1893); and the classical commentary on the Gospel (first published as part of the *Speaker's Commentary*) by Dr. Westcott. Of these three works two stand out as landmarks in theological literature; Dr. Lightfoot's papers were somewhat slighter and less permanent in form, consisting in part of Notes for Lectures, though they bear all the marks of his lucid and judicious scholarship, and though they are I think still specially useful for students.

An Englishman addressing an American audience must needs pause for a moment over the first of these three names[1]. It is the more incumbent on me to do

[1] English readers may be reminded that Dr. Ezra Abbot was an American Unitarian who died in 1884. He was a leading member

this because as a young man, at a time when encouragement is most valued, I was one of many who profited by Dr. Ezra Abbot's generous and self-denying kindness. He opened a correspondence with me, and sent me not only his own books but some by other writers that I might be presumed not to possess, and it was touching to see the care with which corrections were made in these in his own finely formed hand. I would fain not only pay a tribute of reverence to the memory of Dr. Abbot, but also, if I may, repay a little of my own debt by holding up his example to the younger generation of American scholars as one that I would earnestly entreat them to adopt and follow. I do not know how far I am right, but I have always taken the qualities of Dr. Ezra Abbot's work as specially typical of the American mind at its best. His work reminds one in its exactness and precision of those fine mechanical instruments in which America has so excelled. To set for oneself the highest possible standard of accuracy, and to think no time and no pains misspent in the pursuit of it, is a worthy object of a young scholar's ambition.

In like manner we, in England, have a standard proposed to us by Dr. Westcott's famous Commentary on St. John. It is the culminating product of a life

of the American Committee which joined in the production of the Revised Version, and, after serving as Assistant Librarian, became Professor of New Testament Criticism in Harvard University in 1872. He was a scholar of retiring habits, and was one of those who spend in helping and improving the work of others time that might have been given to great work of their own. His literary remains were religiously collected after his death.

that was also devoted to the highest ends. It is characteristic of Dr. Westcott that the Commentary was, I believe, hardly altered in its later editions from the form in which it first appeared. This was due to the thoroughness and circumspection with which the author had in the first instance carried out his task. I believe that in spite of the lapse of time Dr. Westcott's Commentary remains, and will still for long remain, the best that we have on the Fourth Gospel, as it is also (with the article on Origen) the best and most characteristic work that its author bequeathed to the world.

In this connexion I must needs mention another American scholar and divine, to whom I am also bound by personal ties of affectionate regard—the veteran Dr. George Park Fisher of Yale. It is matter for thankfulness that he has been able to give to the world, carefully brought up to date, a new edition of his *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief* (1902). The pages devoted to the Fourth Gospel are, like the rest, full of knowledge and suffused with sweet reasonableness and mild wisdom. Dr. Fisher's attitude is perhaps not exactly that of the younger men, but it certainly is not any less near to the ideal. If I were a tutor or professor in an American seminary, there is no book that I should more warmly recommend to my pupils. To imbibe its spirit would be the best training they could have. I should think it especially excellent as a starting-point for further study. It would implant nothing that would have to be unlearnt.

Dr. Ezra Abbot has in many ways found a worthy

inheritor in Dr. Drummond; and it is perhaps true that the positive results which he obtained are adequately embodied in Dr. Drummond's book, though as a model for work of the kind the older essay can never become antiquated. But, speaking generally, I should think it a great misfortune if the better examples of this older literature were thrust out of use by the newer and more advanced criticism. I believe it to be one of the weak points in that criticism that it too much forgets what has been done. It contents itself with an acceptance that is often grudging or perfunctory and always inadequate of results that have been really obtained. The scheme of argument common to the older writers was to prove, in gradually contracting circles, (1) that the author of the Gospel was a Jew; (2) that he was a Jew of Palestine; (3) that he was a contemporary; and (4) an actual companion and eye-witness of the ministry of our Lord. We must expect the last two propositions to be matter for some controversy, and I shall return to them later; but it seems to me that scant justice is done to the argument as a whole.

Since this paragraph was written I have come across some words of Professor von Dobschütz, which are so much to the point that I am tempted to quote them:

'That the Gospel not only shows a good knowledge of Palestinian localities but also a thoroughly Jewish stamp in thought and expression, is one of the truths rightly emphasized by conservative theology which critical theology is already, though reluctantly, making up its mind to admit: the Hellenism of the Fourth Gospel, together with its unity, belongs to those only

too frequent pre-conceived opinions, on the critical side too, which are all the more obstinately maintained the more unfounded they are[1].'

Would that all critical writers were so clear-sighted and so candid!

### 2. *Mediating Theories.*

The really crucial point in the argument relating to the Fourth Gospel is whether or not the author was an eye-witness of the events which he describes. In any case, if we are to take the indications of the Gospel itself, the author must be identified with 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' But it does not quite necessarily follow that this disciple is also to be identified with the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. Internally there seems to be a fair presumption that he is; and externally, the evidence seems to be clear from the time of Irenaeus (180–90) onwards. But neither the presumption in the one case, nor the evidence in the other, is so stringent as to exclude all possibility of doubt. We shall have presently to consider the whole question upon its merits. But in the meantime we note that in recent years the hypothesis has been definitely put forward that the author of the Gospel was not the Apostle John, but another disciple —some would say a disciple of his—of the same name, commonly known for distinction as 'the Presbyter.' The existence of this second John, if he really did exist, rests upon a single line of an extract from Papias, a writer of the first half of the second century. He too is called a 'disciple of the Lord'; so that he

[1] *Probleme d. apost. Zeitalters*, p. 92 f.

too may have been an eye-witness as fully, or almost as fully, as the Apostle.

The hypothesis which ascribes the Gospel to this John the Presbyter has taken different forms, some more and some less favourable to the historical truth and authority of the Gospel.

From a conservative point of view the most attractive form of the hypothesis is that put forward by the late Dr. Hugo Delff, of Husum, in Hanover [1], to some extent adapted and defended by Bousset in his commentary on the Apocalypse, and by one or two others. The theory is that the beloved disciple was not of the number of the Twelve, but that he was a native of Jerusalem, of a priestly family of wealth and standing. We are expressly told that he was 'known to [2]' the high priest (John xviii. 15); and he seems to have had special information as to what went on at meetings of the Sanhedrin (vii. 45–52, xi. 47–53, xii. 10 ff.). These facts are further connected with the statement by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, towards the end of the second century, that the John who lay upon the breast of the Lord 'became, or acted as, priest and wore the frontlet of gold' (Eus. *H. E.* v. 24. 2 ff.). This John is claimed as one of the 'great lights' of the Churches of Asia.

[1] The writings of Dr. Delff that bear upon the subject of the Fourth Gospel are *Die Geschichte d. Rabbi Jesus v. Nazareth* (Leipzig, n. d., but the preface is dated 1889); *Das vierte Evangelium wiederhergestellt* (Husum, 1890); *Neue Beiträge zur Kritik und Erklärung des vierten Evangeliums* (Husum, 1890).

[2] Bousset thinks that this may mean 'related to' the high priest (*Offenb.* p. 46 n.); but this is questioned by Zahn (*Einl.* ii. 483).

The theory opens up interesting vistas, the discussion of which must, however, be reserved. It is consistent with the attribution of a high degree of authenticity to the Gospel. At the same time it ought to be said that Delff himself regarded certain portions of our present Gospel—more particularly those relating to the Galilean ministry—as interpolations.

Without going all the way with Delff, and without raising the question as to the identity of the beloved disciple, other writers who have inclined towards a middle position took the view that the Gospel was the work of John the Presbyter, whom some of them regarded as a disciple of John the Apostle. At the head of this group would stand Harnack and Schürer, who have examined the external evidence very closely. The assigning of the Gospel to John the Presbyter, or to some unnamed disciple of the Apostle, was indeed the key to the compromise offered by those who came nearest to the traditional position at the end of the eighties and in the early nineties.

One of the very best of these attempts is by Professor von Dobschütz, of Jena, in his brightly written *Probleme des apostolischen Zeitalters*[1] (Leipzig, 1904), to which reference has been made. Dr. von Dobschütz goes with Delff (whom he does not mention) so far as to describe the fourth Evangelist as a native of Jerusalem, and to identify him with John of Ephesus. He does not, however (at least explicitly), identify him with the

[1] This book is not to be confused with *Die urchristlichen Gemeinden* published two years earlier, and now translated under the title *Christian Life in the Primitive Church.*

beloved disciple; and he treats him as rather the figure behind the author, than the actual author, of the Gospel. He also, I cannot but think, makes the mistake of questioning the unity of the Gospel. Probably, if we had his views in full—which as yet we have not—they would come under the next head, and not under that of which we are now speaking.

In Great Britain a theory similar to Harnack's has found expression in Dr. James Moffatt's *Historical New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1901), and in other quarters. In America, it is represented by Professor McGiffert, and, more or less nearly, by Professor Bacon. Of the latter I hope to say a word presently; the former, if I might hazard the opinion, has not yet said his last word on the Fourth Gospel. While I recognize in what he has written many sound and true observations, there seem to be two strains in his thought which are not as yet fully harmonized.

Even Professor Harnack, whose influence is greatest, has not, I venture to think, been quite consistent in the view that he has taken. The Gospel may be assigned to the Presbyter or to some other disciple, and yet have different degrees of value ascribed to it as a historical document. In this respect it seems to me that Dr. Harnack has rather blown hot and cold: in his *Chronologie d. altchristlichen Litteratur* he blew hot; in his more recent lectures (E. Tr. *What is Christianity?* p. 19 f.), and, if I am not mistaken, on Monday last he blew cold [1]. A good deal turns on the description of

[1] Professor Harnack gave a lecture, which I was privileged to hear, at the Union Seminary on October 10, 1904.

John the Presbyter by Papias. In the text of the extract as it stands both John the Presbyter and Aristion are called 'disciples of the Lord.' There is some tendency among critical writers to get rid of these words as a gloss; if they are retained, they may be taken in a stricter or a laxer sense; but if they really cover a relation such as that of the 'beloved disciple,' there could not be a better guarantee of authenticity.

However this may be—and the subject is one of which I hope to speak in more detail—in any case it must be somewhere within the limits marked out by Delff on the one hand, and Harnack with his allies and followers on the other, or else by means of the theories that I am just about to mention, that an understanding must be reached between the two sides, if that understanding is at all to take the form of compromise.

### 3. *Partition Theories.*

Where two or more persons are concerned in the composition of a book, the relation between them may be through a written document, or it may be oral. Hitherto we have been going upon the latter assumption: the mediating theories that we have been considering, so far as they were mediating, have treated the writer of the Gospel, whatever his name, as a disciple or associate of St. John the Apostle; and the information derived from him is supposed to have come by way of personal intercourse. But it is quite conceivable that St. John may have set down some-

thing on paper, and that some later Christian—disciple or not—took this and worked it up into our present Gospel. Accordingly, various attempts have been made at different times to mark off a Gospel within the Gospel, an original authentic document derived from a first-hand authority—either the Apostle or the Presbyter—and certain added material incorporated in the Gospel as we now have it. Many of these attempts are obsolete and do not need discussion. It has already been mentioned that Delff—without any clear necessity even from his own point of view—cuts out more particularly the Galilean passages and some others with them as interpolations. These additions to the Gospel he regards as the work of the author of chap. xxi [1]. But the most systematic and important experiments in this direction are those of Dr. Wendt and Dr. Briggs.

After a preliminary sketch of his theory in the first edition of his *Lehre Jesu* (1886), i. 215–342, Dr. H. H. Wendt brought out in 1900 an elaborate and fully argued analysis of the Gospel, carefully dissecting each section and assigning the parts either to the Apostolic author or to the later redactor. Approximately similar results were obtained independently with a less amount of published argument, by Dr. C. A. Briggs in his *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (1899), p. 327, and in his *New Light on the Life of Jesus* (1904), pp. 140–58. A like theory has been put forward by Professor Soltau (*Zeitschrift f. d. neutest. Wissenschaft*, 1901, pp. 140–9).

[1] *Das vierte Evang.* p. 12 ff.

In my opinion all attempts of this kind are foredoomed to failure. The underlying motive is to rescue some portion of the Gospel as historical, while others are dismissed as untrustworthy. At the same time it is allowed that the separation can only be made where there is a real break in the connexion. On this Schmiedel pertinently remarks:—

'There is much reason to fear that distrust of the authenticity of the substance often causes an interruption of the connexion to be imagined where in reality there is none. Many passages of the same sort as others, which give Wendt occasion for the separating process, are left by him untouched, when the result would not be removal of some piece held to be open to exception in respect to its contents; the ground for exception which he actually takes, on the other hand, is often altogether non-existent [1].'

I look with considerable distrust on many of the attempts that are made to divide up documents on the ground of want of connexion. I suspect that the standard of consecutiveness applied is often too Western and too modern. But the one rock on which it seems to me that any partition theory must be wrecked is the deep-seated unity of structure and composition which is characteristic of the Gospel. Dr. Briggs turns the edge of this argument by referring the unity to the masterful hand of the editor. It is, no doubt, open to him to do so; but we may observe that, if in this way he makes the theory difficult to disprove, he also makes it difficult to prove. I must needs think that both in this case and

[1] *Enc. Bibl.* ii. 2555.

in Dr. Wendt's the proof is quite insufficient. I would undertake to show that the distinctive features of the Gospel are just as plentiful in the passages excised as in those that are retained. Perhaps the most tangible point made by the two critics is the attempt to distinguish between the words for 'miracle': 'works' they would assign to the earlier writer, and 'signs' to the later. We remember, however, that the combination of 'signs' and 'wonders' occurs markedly in St. Paul, e. g. Rom. xv. 19, 2 Cor. xii. 12, and is indeed characteristic of early Christian literature long before the Fourth Gospel was written.

Another very original suggestion of Dr. Briggs' which would be helpful if we could accept it, is that we are not tied down to the chronological order of the Gospel as we have it, but that this too is due to the later editor, who has arranged the sections of his narrative rather according to subject than to sequence in time. I am prepared to allow that the narrative may not be always strictly in the order in which the events occurred; and it is true that there are some difficulties which the hypothesis would meet. At the same time we cannot but notice that the order is by no means accidental, but that attention is expressly drawn to it in the Gospel itself; see (e. g. ii. 11, iv. 54, xxi. 14). And some incidents seem clearly to hang together which Dr. Briggs has divided [1] (e. g. i. 29, 35, 43, where the connexion is natural historically, as well as expressly noted by the Evangelist).

I fear that the learned Professor is seeking in a

[1] *New Light*, &c., p. 149.

wrong direction for a solution of the problem of the Gospel. But I would be the last to undervalue the vigorous independence and the fearlessness and fertility in experiment that are conspicuous in all his writings.

Perhaps I should be right in saying a few words at this point about Professor B. W. Bacon of Yale. His view is not as yet (I believe) quite sufficiently developed in print for me to be clear how much he would refer to oral transmission and how much to a written source. He distinguishes three hands in the Gospel. I gather that the first would be that of the Apostle, but he as yet stands dimly in the background. Then comes the main body of the Gospel, without the Appendix. This is ascribed to John the Presbyter, whom—rather by a paradox—Professor Bacon would seek in Palestine and not in Asia Minor. Lastly there is the editor who works over the whole.

The two articles lately contributed to the *Hibbert Journal* (i. 511 ff., ii. 323 ff.)[1] are highly original, very incisive, and exceedingly clever. My objection to them would be that they are too clever. Professor Bacon has been to Germany, and learnt his lesson there too well. At least I find myself differing profoundly from his whole method of argument. The broad simple arguments that seem to me really of importance (Irenaeus, Heracleon, Polycrates, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria) he puts aside, and then he spends his strength in making bricks with a minimum

[1] A third article, on the internal evidence, appeared in January of the present year, iii. 353 ff.

of straw, and even with no straw at all (the argument from silence).

### 4. *Uncompromising Rejection.*

I began by saying that the tendency towards *rapprochement* which was characteristic of the eighties and nineties, gave way towards the end of the century, and has been succeeded in recent years by conspicuous instances of uncompromising denial, at once of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel and of its historical character. The names of Jülicher, Schmiedel, Wrede, Wernle, Jean Réville and Loisy are sufficient evidence of this.

We shall probably not be wrong in classing with these writers the eminent scholar Dr. H. J. Holtzmann of Strassburg. It is indeed characteristic of Dr. Holtzmann's method to avoid anything like dogmatic assertion of his own opinion, to work in with subtle skill a kaleidoscopic presentation of the opinions of others, while himself remaining in the background. He does indeed leave room for a rather larger amount of authentic tradition in the Gospel than the other writers mentioned. Still, in the main his position is sceptical, both as to the Asian tradition of St. John, and as to the historical character of the Gospel.

It may be observed in passing that Dr. H. J. Holtzmann of Strassburg should be carefully distinguished from his younger cousin Oscar Holtzmann, who is now Professor at Giessen. Dr. Oscar Holtzmann published a monograph on the Fourth Gospel in 1887, and he has since brought out a *Life of Christ*

which has lately been translated into English. The two cousins occupy much the same general position; the younger has not the distinction of the elder, but he compensates to some extent by greater clearness and definiteness in the expression of his views.

Another of the older writers, Dr. O. Pfleiderer, is even more thorough-going as an allegorist. For him the Gospel is from first to last a didactic work in the guise of history; it is a 'transparent allegory of religious and dogmatic ideas[1].' He would place the first draft of the Gospel about the year 135, the last chapter and the First Epistle about 150[2]. But I have long thought that this attractive writer, though interesting and instructive as a historian of thought, is a 'negligible quantity' in the field of criticism proper.

The other four German writers whom I have mentioned all belong to the younger generation. Dr. Schmiedel (who though a Swiss Professor is, I believe, German by birth) is the eldest, and he is not yet quite fifty-three: Jülicher, the next on the list, is forty-seven. And as they belong to the younger generation, so also they may be said to mark the rise of a new School, or new method of treatment, in German Theology. The Germany for which they speak is not the dreaming, wistful, ineffective, romantic Germany of the past, but the practical, forceful, energetic and assertive Germany of the present. All, as I have said, are able writers; and the type of their ability

[1] *Urchristentum* (ed. 2, Berlin, 1902), ii. 389.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 450.

has much in common, though they have also their little individual differences. They have all a marked directness and lucidity of style. What they think they say, without hesitation and without reserve; no one can ever be in any doubt as to their meaning. They are all apt to be somewhat contemptuous, not only of divergent views, but of a type of mind that differs from their own. Of the four, Jülicher and especially Wernle have the warmer temperament; Schmiedel and Wrede are cold and severe. Wrede writes like a mathematician, who puts Q. E. D. at the end of each step in the argument—though it would be a misfortune if the demonstration were taken to be as complete as he thinks it. Schmiedel is rather the lawyer who pursues his adversary from point to point with relentless acumen: if we could grant the major premises of his argument, there would be much to admire in his handling of the minor; but the major premises, as I think I shall show, are often at fault. Jülicher is just the downright capable person, who sees vividly what he sees and is intolerant of that which does not appeal to him. Wernle alternately attracts and repels; he attracts by his real enthusiasm for that with which he sympathizes, by his skill in presentation, and his careful observance of perspective and proportion; he repels by aggressiveness and self-confidence.

The two French writers also have something in common, though they belong to different communions. We are not surprised to find that both have an easy grace of style, to which we might in both cases also

give the epithet 'airy,' because both are fond of speaking in generalities which are not always in the closest contact with facts; both are thorough-going allegorists, and regard the whole Gospel as a pure product of ideas and not literal history. In spite of their difference of communion, M. Loisy is on the critical side of his mind as essentially rationalist as his Protestant *confrère*, though he brings back, by an act of faith which some of us would call a *tour de force*, in the region of dogmatics what he had taken away in the field of criticism.

It seems to me that there is one word that requires to be said, though I am anxious not to have my motive misunderstood in saying it. I do not wish to do so in the least *ad invidiam*. Controversy is, I hope, no longer conducted in that manner. I speak simply of an objective fact which has too important a bearing on the whole question to be ignored.

When I read an argument by Professor Schürer, and try to reply to it, I am conscious that we are arguing (so to speak) in the same plane. I feel that the attitude of my opponent to the evidence is substantially the same as my own. Whatever the presuppositions may be deep down in his mind, he at any rate keeps them in abeyance. No doubt we differ widely enough as to detail; but in principle I should credit my opponent with an attitude that is really judicial, that tries to keep dogmatic considerations, or questions of ultimate belief as much in suspense as possible, and to weigh the arguments *for* and *against* in equal scales. But when I pass over to the younger

theologians, I no longer feel that this is so; we seem to be arguing, not in the same, but in different planes. There is a far-reaching presupposition not merely far back but near the front of their minds. I cannot regard them as fellow seekers in the sense that we are both doing our best to ascertain how far the events of the Gospel history really transcended common experience. I take it that on this point their minds are made up before they begin to put pen to paper.

They all start with the 'reduced' conception of Christianity current in so many quarters, that is akin to the ancient Ebionism or Arianism. But so far as they do this their verdict as to the Fourth Gospel is determined for them beforehand. The position is stated with great frankness by Mr. Conybeare:

'It may indeed be said that if Anthanasius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, Arius would never have been confuted. Had the fathers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries not known this Gospel, or not embraced it as authentic, the Church would have remained semi-Ebionite, and the councils of Nice and Ephesus would never have taken place [1].'

This does not indeed quite correspond to the facts. To make it do so, we should have to blot out St. Paul, and other parts of the New Testament, as well as St. John. But just so far as the reasoning holds good, it is obvious that we may invert it. If a writer starts with a conception of Christianity that is 'semi-Ebionite' or 'semi-Arian,' he is bound at all costs to rule out the Fourth Gospel, not only as a dogmatic authority, but as a record of historical fact.

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, ii. 620.

Another characteristic is common to the writers of the School of which we are speaking. The complexity of a critical hypothesis very rarely stands in the way of its adoption; but a very little psychological complexity acts as a deterrent. For instance, after quoting from B. Weiss some rather exaggerated language as to the freedom used by the evangelist in reproducing the discourses, Schmiedel goes on thus:

'As compared with such a line of defence, there is a positive relief from an intolerable burden as soon as the student has made up his mind to give up any such theory as that of the "genuineness" of the Gospel, as also of its authenticity in the sense of its being the work of an eye-witness who meant to record actual history [1].'

So far from being an 'intolerable burden,' it seems to me that Weiss' theory is not only in itself perfectly natural, nay inevitable, but that it is also specially helpful as enabling us to account at one and the same time for the elements that are, and those that are not, strictly genuine in the report of the discourses.

Jülicher writes to much the same effect as Schmiedel; and the passage which follows is indeed very characteristic of his habit of mind:

'The defenders of the "genuineness" of the Gospel indeed for the most part allow that John has carried out a certain idealization with the discourses of Jesus, that in writing he has found himself in a slight condition of ecstasy, in short, that his presentation of his hero is something more than historical. With such mysticism or phraseology science can have no concern; in the Johannean version of Christ's discourses form and

[1] *Enc. Bibl.* ii. 2554.

substance cannot be separated, the form to be assigned to the later writer, and the substance to Jesus Himself: *sint ut sunt aut non sint! . . .*'

To please Professor Jülicher a picture must be all black or all white; he is intolerant of half-shades that pass from the one into the other. And no doubt there are some problems for the treatment of which such a habit is an advantage, but hardly those which have to do with living human personalities.

The French writers, like the German, have a certain resemblance to each other. To some of these points I shall have to come back in detail later. I will only note for the present that they are both allegorists of an extreme kind. I would just for the present commend to both a passage of Wernle's:

'This conception, however, of the Fourth Gospel as a philosophical work, to which the Alexandrines first gave currency, and which is still widely held to-day, is a radically wrong one. John's main idea, the descent of the Son of Man to reveal the Father, is unphilosophical. . . . So, too, the Johannine miracles are never intended to be taken in a purely allegorical sense. The fact of their actual occurrence is the irrefragable proof of God's appearance upon earth [1].'

If the miracles of the Fourth Gospel were facts there was some point in the constant appeals that the Gospel makes to them; but there would be no point if these appeals were to a set of didactic fictions.

Within the last few months a monograph has appeared, which from its general tendency may be

[1] *Beginnings of Christianity*, ii. 166 ff.; cf. von Dobschütz, *Probleme*, p. 94.

ranged with the works of which we have been speaking, though in its method it rather stands by itself, E. Schwartz, *Ueber den Tod der Söhne Zebedaei* (Berlin, 1904). Dr. Schwartz is the editor of Eusebius in the Berlin series, and his point of view is primarily philological. He writes in a disagreeable spirit, at once carping and supercilious. The only generous words in his paper are a few in reference to the Church historian. He exemplifies copiously most of the procedure specially deprecated in these lectures. His monograph has, however, a value of its own, from the precise and careful way in which he has collected and discusses the material bearing upon the history of the Evangelist and of the Gospel in the first and earlier part of the second century.

### 5. *Recent Reaction.*

Far as I conceive that all these writers have travelled away from the truth, they followed each other in such quick succession that it would have been strange if public opinion had not been affected by them. To one who himself firmly believed in St. John's authorship of the Gospel, and in its value as a record of the beginning of Christianity, the outlook last autumn seemed as, I said, very black. A single book dispelled the clouds and cleared the air. Dr. Drummond's *Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* is of special value to the defenders of the Gospel for two reasons: (1) because it is the work of one who cannot in any case be accused of dogmatic prepossessions, as it would to all appearance be more favourable

to his general position that the Gospel should not be genuine or authentic; and (2) because the whole work is something more than a defence of the Gospel; it is a striking application to a particular problem of principles of criticism in many respects differing from those at present in vogue, and at the same time, as I cannot but think, a marked improvement on them.

To these points must be added the inherent qualities of the book itself—the thorough knowledge with which it is written, its evident sincerity and effort to get at realities, its nervous directness and force of style, its judicial habit of weighing all that is to be said on both sides.

Perhaps the most important and the most far-reaching of all the corrections of current practice is a passage in the text with the note appended to it upon the *argument from silence*. The text is dealing with the common assumption that because Justin quotes less freely from the Fourth Gospel than from the other three, therefore he must have ascribed to it a lower degree of authority.

'But why, then, it may be asked, has Justin not quoted the Fourth Gospel at least as often as the other three? I cannot tell, any more than I can tell why he has never named the supposed authors of his Memoirs, or has mentioned only one of the parables, or made no reference to the Apostle Paul, or nowhere quoted the Apocalypse, though he believed it to be an apostolic and prophetical work. His silence may be due to pure accident, or the book may have seemed less adapted to his apologetic purposes; but considering how many things there are about which

he is silent, we cannot admit that the *argumentum a silentio* possesses in this case any validity.'

To this is added a note which raises the whole general question:

'An instructive instance of the danger of arguing from what is not told is furnished by Theophilus of Antioch. He does not mention the names of the writers of the Gospels, except John; he does not tell us anything about any of them; he says nothing about the origin or the date of the Gospels themselves, or about their use in the Church. He quotes from them extremely little, though he quotes copiously from the Old Testament. But most singular of all, in a defence of Christianity he tells us nothing about Christ Himself; if I am not mistaken, he does not so much as name Him or allude to Him; and, if the supposition were not absurd, it might be argued with great plausibility that he cannot have known anything about Him. For he undertakes to explain the origin of the word Christian; but there is not a word about Christ, and his conclusion is *ἡμεῖς τούτου εἵνεκεν καλούμεθα ὅτι χριόμεθα ἔλαιον θεοῦ* (*Ad Autol.* i. 12). In the following chapter, when he would establish the doctrine of the resurrection, you could not imagine that he had heard of the resurrection of Christ; and instead of referring to this, he has recourse to the changing seasons, the fortune of seeds, the dying and reappearance of the moon, and the recovery from illness. We may learn from these curious facts that it is not correct to say that a writer knows nothing of certain things, simply because he had not occasion to refer to them in his only extant writing: or even because he does not mention them when his subject would seem naturally to lead him to do so[1].'

The remarkable thing in this note is not only its independence and sagacity, but more particularly the

[1] *Character*, &c., p. 157 f.

trained sagacity which brings to bear upon the argument just those examples which are most directly in point and most telling.

Professor Bacon, in the first of his recent articles (*Hibbert Journal*, i. 513), good-naturedly defends the present writer from the charge of wishing to discredit the argument from silence in general. And it is true that in the place to which he refers I had in mind only a particular application of the argument. Still I am afraid that I do wish to see its credit abated. At least it is my belief that too much use is made of the argument, and that too much weight is attached to it. There are two main objections to the way in which the argument is often handled. (1) The critic does not ask himself *what* is silent—what extent of material does the argument cover? Often this extent is so small that, on the doctrine of chances, no inference can rightly be drawn from it. And (2) experience shows that the argument is often most fallacious. Dr. Drummond's examples of this will I hope become classical [1].

Dr. Drummond's book contains a multitude of

[1] An incidental passage in Dr. Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (p. 120 f.) deserves to be set by the side of Dr. Drummond's. He is speaking of the *Satiricon* of Petronius. 'Those who have attributed it to the friend and victim of Nero have been confronted with the silence of Quintilian, Juvenal, and Martial, with the silence of Tacitus as to any literary work by Petronius, whose character and end he has described with a curious sympathy and care. It is only late critics of the lower empire, such as Macrobius, and a dilettante aristocrat like Sidonius Apollinaris, who pay any attention to this remarkable work of genius. And Sidonius seems to make its author a citizen of Marseilles. Yet silence in

passages like the above and exhibiting the same qualities. Many of them are a vindication of popular judgement as against the far-fetched arguments of professed scholars. The excellence of his method seems to me to consist largely in this, that he begins by making for himself an imaginative picture of the conditions with which he has to deal, not only of the particular piece of evidence which shows upon the surface, but of the inferential background lying behind it; that he thus escapes the danger of the *doctrinaire* who argues straight from the one bit of evidence before him to the conclusion; and that he also constantly tests the process of his argument by reference to parallel conditions and circumstances in our own day which we can verify for ourselves.

If I were to express an opinion on the characteristic positions which Dr. Drummond takes up, I think it would be that, whereas he seems to me to overstate a little—but only a little—the external evidence for the Gospel, he at the same time somewhat understates the internal evidence. He gives his decision against the Fourth Gospel sometimes where I cannot help thinking that a writer of equal impartiality would not necessarily do so. It would also be unfair if I did

such cases may be very deceptive. Martial and Statius never mention one another, and both might seem unknown to Tacitus. And Tacitus, after the fashion of the Roman aristocrat, in painting the character of Petronius, may not have thought it relevant or important to notice a light work such as the *Satiricon*, even if he had ever seen it. He does not think it worth while to mention the histories of the Emperor Claudius, the tragedies of Seneca, or the *Punica* of Silius Italicus.'

not say that his general estimate of the historical trustworthiness of the Gospel is lower than I should form myself.

I have spoken of Dr. Drummond's book first because of its importance as a landmark in the study of the Gospel, and because it covers the whole of the ground with which we are concerned. But another book preceded it by a week or two in the date of its publication, which as yet deals only with a limited portion of this ground, and yet which, unless I am mistaken, presents qualities similar in general character to those of Dr. Drummond, though perhaps the expression of them is rather less striking. I refer to Dr. Stanton's *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, Part I. Dr. Stanton's book is planned on a larger scale than Dr. Drummond's in so far as it includes all four Gospels; but as yet he has only dealt with the external evidence bearing upon their early use. An important part of the volume is naturally that devoted to the Fourth Gospel. Like Dr. Drummond, Dr. Stanton also presents a marked contrast as to method with the group of continental writers that we have just been considering. It was therefore a matter of special interest that his book should be reviewed a few months after its appearance by Dr. Schmiedel in the *Hibbert Journal* (ii. 607–12). It is not very surprising that Dr. Stanton was moved to reply to his critic in the next number (pp. 803–7). There is a direct antithesis of contrasted and competing principles.

It may naturally be thought that I am a biased

judge in such a case; but I confess that it seems to me that the advantage is very much on the side of my countryman. He shows without much difficulty that Dr. Schmiedel has seriously misrepresented him. Indeed one might say that the critic's representation of views and arguments was not so much derived from the book he was reviewing as from his own internal consciousness of what might be expected from an apologist. This, however, is the personal, and more ephemeral, aspect of the controversy. It is of more general interest to note the critical assumptions made in the course of the review. The writer admits that his opponent 'not unfrequently gives the impression of being animated by the sincere resolve to maintain nothing save only what can be assumed with certainty.' 'With certainty' is characteristic; the writer attributes to Dr. Stanton (in this case) what he would have aimed at doing himself. In the eyes of the school to which Dr. Schmiedel belongs, I will not say exactly that all the data of which they approve are certain, but they are treated very much as if they were; in building up an argument upon them, possibilities easily and imperceptibly glide into probabilities, and probabilities into certainties. Dr. Stanton disclaims the idea of dealing with certainties; he would only profess to adduce facts on a nicely graduated scale of probability, which by their cumulative weight went some way to carry conviction.

'Concerning Barn. iv. 14, [Dr. Stanton] says (p. 33) with justice that this is our earliest instance of the citation of a saying of Christ as "scripture."

In the year A. D. 130, the date upon which he rightly fixes for the composition of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, this estimate of the Gospels would have been in the highest degree surprising, since it is not until A. D. 170 that the next examples of such an estimate make their appearance.' Dr. Schmiedel goes on (1) to have recourse to the accustomed expedient of suggesting that Barnabas is quoting, not from the words of the Gospel which are identical, but from a passage in 4 Ezra which is quite different; and (2) if that expedient fails, to represent the quotation as a 'winged word,' though it is expressly introduced by the formula 'it is written.'

However, it is not of either of these points that I wish to speak, but rather to call attention to what Dr. Schmiedel thinks would be 'in the highest degree surprising.' Why so surprising? What substantial ground have we for expecting anything else? In the first place Dr. Schmiedel begins by exaggerating the significance of the phrase 'it is written,' as though on its first extant occurrence it would necessarily imply full canonical authority. And then he goes on to lay stress upon what is really little more than the absence of literature. If we take the whole extant Christian literature between the years 130 and 170 A. D., it would not fill more than a thin octavo volume, and by far the greater part of that is taken up with external controversy. What sort of argument can be drawn from such a state of things as to the exact estimate which Christians formed of their own sacred books? No valid argument can be

drawn from it either way, and it is far better simply to confess our ignorance. It is reasonable to suppose that there was a gradual development in the process by which the Gospels attained to the position that we call canonical; but the data to which we have access do not allow us to map out its stages with any precision.

It seems to me to be a fundamental defect in the reasoning of Dr. Schmiedel and his school that they fail to see that the real question is, not simply, What is the evidence for this or that proposition? but, What is the relation which the extant evidence bears to the whole body of that which once existed, and how far can we trust the inferences drawn from it?

I pass over some quite unwarrantable assumptions which Dr. Schmiedel makes as to the apologetic point of view: such as that, 'if there can be shown to be resemblance between a canonical and a non-canonical writing, the former is uniformly to be regarded as the earlier'; and that 'Apocryphal Gospels would not have been used in the influential circles of the Church.' Apologists would lay down nothing of the kind, though in a certain number of concrete cases they may think that the priority of a canonical to a non-canonical writing does not need arguing, and though they may also think that in some particular case the evidence for the use of an Apocryphal Gospel by a Church writer is insufficient.

Dr. Schmiedel easily satisfies himself that he has refuted an argument bearing on the Fourth Gospel. Professor Stanton had rightly maintained, 'There

must have been good grounds for believing that the Fourth Gospel was founded upon the apostolic testimony in order to overcome the prejudice that would be created by the contrasts between it and the Synoptics.' He has shown, I think, in his reply, that the instances alleged against this are not relevant, and also that the part played by the two ideas of Apostolicity and Catholicity in the forming of the Canon are not quite correctly stated by his opponent. But even if they had been as stated the original contention would still have been left standing, because agreement with previously accepted writings was part of the idea of Catholicity. It is a sound argument to say that a work so independent as the Fourth Gospel must have come with good credentials to obtain the place which it held.

Lastly, when Dr. Schmiedel speaks so imposingly of 'the silence of the entire first half of the second century in regard to the sojourn of the Apostle John in Ephesus,' I would once more ask him what this silence amounts to. What is the total bulk of the literature on which the argument is based? Is it possible to draw from it an inference of any value at all[1]?

[1] The two books of Drs. Drummond and Stanton were reviewed by M. Loisy in the *Revue Critique*, 1904, pp. 422–4, and Dr. Drummond's by Prof. H. J. Holtzmann in *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 1905, cols. 136–9. Both reviews were disappointing, though Dr. Holtzmann's contains the usual amount of painstaking detail. It is natural that play should be made with the real inconsistencies of Dr. Drummond's position; but his weightier arguments are in neither case directly grappled with.

# LECTURE II

## CRITICAL METHODS. THE OLDEST SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

### I. i. *Defects in the Methods of current Criticism.*

It is now rather more than eight years since Harnack wrote the famous Preface to his *Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*. It was an instance of the genial insight of the writer, and a keen diagnosis of the criticism of the day.

The main outline of the Preface will be remembered. Looking back over the period from which Science was just beginning to emerge, the writer characterized it as one in which all the early Christian literature including the New Testament had been treated as a tissue of illusions and falsifications. That time, he went on to say, was past. For Science it had only been an episode, during which much had been learnt and after which much had to be forgotten. His own researches, Harnack explained, would be found to go in a reactionary direction even beyond the middle position of current criticism. The results might be summed up by saying that the oldest literature of the Church, in its main points and in most of its details, from the point of view of literary history, was veracious and trustworthy. In the whole New Testament there was probably only a single writing that could be called pseudonymous in the strict sense of the term,

the so-called Second Epistle of St. Peter; and, apart from the Gnostic fictions, the whole number of pseudonymous writings down to Irenaeus was very small, and in one case (the Acts of Thecla) the production of such a work was expressly condemned. In like manner the amount of interpolation was also far less than had been supposed; and the tradition relating to this early period might in the main, and with some reservations, be trusted.

Baur and his school had thought themselves compelled, in order to give an intelligible account of the rise of Christianity, to throw over both the statements in the writings themselves and those of tradition about them, and to post-date their composition by several decades. They were driven to do this by mistaken premises. Starting with the assumption that all these writings were composed with a definite purpose, to commend some sectional view of Christianity, they were constantly on the watch for traces of that purpose, and they found them in the most unexpected places. The views of Baur and his followers had been generally given up; but the tendencies set on foot by them remained. The Christian writings were still approached in an attitude of suspicion; they were cross-examined in the spirit of a hostile attorney; or else they were treated after the manner of a *petit maître*, fastening upon all sorts of small details, and arguing from them in the face of clear and decisive indications. Baur thought that everything had a motive, and an interested motive. But, whereas he sought for the motive on broad lines, his more recent

successors either gave themselves up to the search for minor incidental motives, or for interpolations on a large scale, or else they gave way to a thorough-going scepticism which confused together probabilities and improbabilities as though they were all the same.

Harnack went on to describe the results of the labours of the last two decades (1876–96) as constituting a definite 'return to tradition.' This return to tradition he regarded as characteristic of the period in which he was writing; indeed he looked forward to a time when the questions of literary history which had excited so much interest would do so no longer, because it would come to be generally understood that the early Christian traditions were in the main right.

This Preface of Harnack's attracted considerable attention, and probably nowhere more than in England. English students hailed it as the beginning of a new epoch, and one in which they could be more at home. It fell in with certain marked characteristics of the English mind. Even the progressive element in that mind naturally works on conservative lines; it has been reluctant to break away from the past. The very advances of freedom, so steady and so sure, have not been revolutionary; they have been advances

> 'Of freedom slowly broadening down
> From precedent to precedent.'

But it was not only the destructive conclusions of continental criticism with which dissatisfaction was felt, and which gave an apologetic colour to much English work. The methods were in many ways not less

distasteful than the conclusions. Englishmen felt, whether they said so or not, that there was something wrong. And therefore, when a scholar of Harnack's distinction put their thoughts into words and pointed to the very defects of which they seemed to be conscious, their hopes were raised that at last a movement was begun which they could follow with sympathy, and in which they might perhaps to some extent bear a part.

When I take upon myself to speak in this way of 'English students,' I of course do so with some reservations. I have in mind the rather considerable majority of the theological faculties in our Universities, and I might say the majority of the teaching staffs of all denominations throughout Great Britain; for there are excellent relations, and a great amount of solidarity, among British teachers of Theology in all the churches. A good general representation of the average views would be found (e. g.) in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. No doubt there is also the other type—the type represented by *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. There are not a few among us who are less dissatisfied with Continental methods, and who pursue those methods themselves with ability and independence. And beyond these there are very many more, especially among the cultivated and interested laity, who are acquainted in a general way with what has been done on the Continent, and who are impressed by what they take to be the results, though for the most part they have not time to test the processes. I say advisedly that this class is impressed by what it conceives to be

results, because I imagine that, while there is a feeling that Continental scholars are freer in their researches and less trammelled than our own, there is also some reserve owing to the consciousness that the results have not been fully tested. To this extent I should say that the intellectual posture of this class was one of waiting—serious and interested waiting—rather than of complete committal either to one side or to the other.

Since my visit to America I seem to be better able to speak of the situation there, though closer acquaintance did but in the main confirm and define the opinion that I had previously formed. There are several differences between the conditions in the two countries. On the other side of the Atlantic there are probably greater inequalities of theological instructedness. They have a greater number of Universities and Seminaries, in which the standard varies more than it does with us. And while on the one hand general culture and that kind of vague knowledge of the nature and tendencies of criticism which goes with general culture is more widely diffused in these islands, on the other hand I should be inclined to think that a real first-hand knowledge of critical work is more often to be found there than it is here. This is due to the fact that a large proportion of the ablest professors and teachers have been themselves trained in Germany. And yet, in spite of these differences and inequalities, there is a general tendency, which seemed to me to embrace the whole nation.

It was summed up in a few words by one of the Methodist Bishops (it will be remembered that the Episcopalian Methodists are strong in America) with whom I had some conversation. He had, I believe, been secretary of some Board of Religious Education, and spoke with wide knowledge. I should be afraid to say how many students had passed through his hands. And, speaking of these students, he said that their general attitude was this: 'They want to keep their faith; and yet they also want to see the realities of things.'

The same description would, I believe, fit the teachers and professors as well as the students, including those trained in Germany. They too want to keep their faith, and to help their students to keep their faith. As compared with the state of things in Germany, there is a more general and sustained effort to make their teaching positive and constructive; and this constructive teaching takes, I suspect, in most cases very similar lines—I should describe it as in the main Ritschlianism of the Right. At the same time, they too want to see the reality of things; in other words, they want to teach by strictly scientific methods. And the only further remark that I should have to make would be that they are perhaps a little inclined—and it naturally could not be otherwise—to look at these methods through German spectacles.

Now I would not hesitate to carry this generalization still further. We, in this country, have probably a greater number of cross currents; there is a greater number of *media* that stand between the individual

and his ultimate aims and wishes, in the shape of loyalties to this or that church or party. And yet I think that, broadly speaking, we should not be wrong in summing up what is really at the bottom of the minds and hearts of the whole Anglo-Saxon race in the same words: 'They want to keep their faith; and yet they also want to see the realities of things.'

It is the equilibrium of these two propositions that is most characteristic. I fully believe that motives of the same kind are present among the Germans as well as ourselves. I could easily name a number of German professors who, I feel sure, are as anxious to keep their faith as we are. At the head of the list I should put Harnack himself, whose views have been so much discussed in this country. There is, however, a greater diversity of attitude among the professorial body as a whole. And so far as they were agreed—I am speaking especially of the widespread liberal branch—they would, I think, all invert the order of the two propositions: they would give precedence to the desire to get at realities; and they would identify this getting at realities with the use of scientific method. The reason is that in Germany, more than elsewhere, the prevalent standards of judgement are essentially academic. The Universities give the lead and set the tone for the whole nation; and the Universities have now been accustomed for many generations to an atmosphere of free thought.

Now it is far from my intention to undervalue, either the use of scientific method in general, or German science in particular. I have the highest opinion of

both. By far the greater part of the advance that has been made in Theology—and I believe that a great advance has been made in our own country as well as elsewhere—I would again appeal to Hastings' *Dictionary* as representing a sort of average—has been due to the stricter application of science; and a great part of this has been German science. Honour must be given where honour is due. We must not hold back the full recognition that at the present time Germany holds the first place in Science, and that its output of scientific work is perhaps as great as that of all the rest of the world besides. I am not sure whether this is an exaggeration, but I hardly think it is.

But in all the more tentative forms of science, such as philosophy, history, and theology, there is, or at least has been so far, a double element, one that is stable and permanent, and another that is more or less local and ephemeral.

If I proceed to offer some criticisms upon German critical methods, I am perfectly well aware that the Germans in turn would have something to criticize in ours. At the present day discussion is not limited to any one country, but is international. It is by scholars of different race and training comparing notes together that mistakes are corrected, methods gradually perfected, and results established. I shall not hesitate therefore to point out where it seems to me that German methods have gone wrong. And I feel that I can do this the more freely when a scholar of Harnack's high standing has set the example. The faults that we seem to have noticed in German criti-

cism are very much those which he has indicated: it has been too academic, too *doctrinaire*, too artificial, too much made in the study and too little checked by observation of the facts of daily life. The very excellences of the German mind have in some ways contributed to the formation of wrong standards of judgement. More than other people the Germans have the power of sustained abstract thought, of thoroughness in mustering and reviewing all the elements of a problem, of thinking a problem out in such a way as not to leave gaps and inconsistencies. Hence they are too ready to assume that all the rest of the world will do the same, that if an important piece of evidence is omitted in an argument it can only be because it was not known, that carelessness and oversights and inconsistencies are things that need not be reckoned with. And there is also too great a tendency to argue as though men were all made upon one pattern. There is a want of elasticity of conception. And, to sum up many points in one, there is a great tendency to purism or over-strictness in the wrong place, and to over-laxity also in the wrong place, to strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.

What one desiderates most is greater simplicity, greater readiness to believe that as a rule, in ancient times as well as modern, people meant what they said and said what they meant, and that more often than not they had some substantial reason for saying it.

ii. *Instances in which Criticism has corrected itself.*

These are not merely *a priori* reflections, but they are based upon experience of the actual course that criticism has taken. By this time criticism has a considerable history behind it. It has corrected some of its mistakes, and is able to look back upon the course by which it came to make them. In this way it should learn some wholesome lessons.

I will take three rather conspicuous examples in which criticism has at first gone wrong and has afterwards come to set itself right, in the hope that they may teach us what to avoid in future. I imagine that they may he found to throw some side-light upon the particular problem of the Fourth Gospel.

The first example that I will take shall be from the criticism of the Ignatian Epistles. I may assume that the Seven Epistles are now generally allowed to be genuine, and written by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, on his way to martyrdom at Rome sometime before the end of the reign of Trajan (i. e. before 117). This result is due especially to the labours of two scholars, Zahn and Lightfoot. It is instructive to note with what kind of argument they had to contend.

Both in their day had to stem a formidable current of opinion. Bishop Lightfoot wrote in the Preface to his great work dated 'St. Peter's day, 1885':

'We have been told more than once that "all impartial critics" have condemned the Ignatian Epistles as spurious. But this moral intimidation is unworthy of the eminent writers who have sometimes

indulged in it, and will certainly not be permitted to foreclose the investigation. If the ecclesiastical terrorism of past ages has lost its power, we shall, in the interests of truth, be justly jealous of allowing an academic terrorism to usurp its place.'

I should not find it difficult to produce parallels to this kind of intimidation in the case of the Fourth Gospel. To look back in face of them upon the issue of the Ignatian controversy is consoling.

Much was said in the course of the controversy about certain features of style and character as unworthy of an Apostolic father. It was enough to answer with Bishop Lightfoot that 'objections of this class rest for the most part on the assumption that an Apostolic father must be a person of ideal perfections intellectually as well as morally—an assumption which has only to be named in order to be refuted [1].'

It is true that the letters contained exaggerated language of humility, and also an exaggerated eagerness for martyrdom. Beside these general features, there were a good many strange and crude expressions of other kinds. It is needless to say that it did not in the least follow that such expressions could not have been used by Ignatius. But if the critics had been willing to study the letters a little deeper and with a little more sympathy, they might have found reason to change their estimate even of these acknowledged flaws.

In dealing with Ignatius it is always important to remember that we have to do with a Syrian and not

[1] *Ignatius*, i. 405.

a Greek. Certainly the language that he wrote was not in his hand a pliant instrument. It always cost him a struggle to express his thought; and the expression is very often far from perfect. The figure of the writer that one pictures to oneself is rugged, shaggy (if one may use the word), uncouth; and yet there is a virile, nervous strength about his language which is at times very impressive. And even his extravagances differ in this from many like extravagances, that they are not in the least insincere. For instance, if we read through the letter to Polycarp, we shall see in it a really great personality. And Ignatius had a very considerable power of thought as well as of character. Outside the New Testament, he is the first great Christian thinker; and he is one who left a deep mark on all subsequent thinking.

I have little doubt that the strong expressions of humility that are found from time to time in Ignatius are wrung from him by the recollection of the life that he led before he became a Christian. They are doubtless suggested by St. Paul, and they spring from a feeling not less intense than his.

The humility of St. John is a different matter. But as very shallow and obtuse criticisms are sometimes passed upon it, the Ignatian parallel may serve as a wholesome warning. I shall have occasion to return to this point later.

The main arguments against the Ignatian authorship of the letters were drawn from the seemingly advanced condition of things which they implied in the way of heretical teaching on the one hand, and church

organization on the other. The objections on these grounds have been quite cleared up; and now the letters supply some of the most important data that the historian has to go upon.

It will be remembered that Bishop Lightfoot began by converting himself before he converted others. He had been inclined to think at one time that the shorter Syriac version represented the true Ignatius. He tells us himself how he came to give up this opinion. He says:

'I found that to maintain the priority of the Curetonian letters I was obliged from time to time to ascribe to the supposed Ignatian forger feats of ingenuity, knowledge, intuition, skill, and self-restraint, which transcended all bounds of probability' (Preface to the First Edition).

This is another bit of experience that it may be worth while to bear in mind.

My second example is perhaps in this sense not quite so clear a case, that there is not as yet as complete a *consensus* in regard to it as there is in regard to the Ignatian Letters. It is taken from the discussions which have been going on at various times in the last twenty-five years as to the genuineness of the treatise *De Vita Contemplativa* which has come down to us among the works of Philo.

A marked impression was made on the side of the attack by a monograph by Lucius, *Die Therapeuten u. ihre Stellung in d. Gesch. der Askese*, published in 1879. This, together with the acceptance at least of the

negative part of its result by Schürer, inaugurated a period during which opinion was on the whole rather unfavourable to the treatise. A reaction began with two articles by Massebieau in 1888, followed by the important and valuable work of Mr. F. C. Conybeare, *Philo about the Contemplative Life*, Oxford, 1895. The success of this defence may he regarded as clenched by the accession of such excellent and impartial authorities as Cohn and Wendland, who are bringing out the great new edition of Philo, and of Dr. James Drummond. It is true that Schürer reviewed Mr. Conybeare in an adverse sense so far as his main conclusion was concerned, and that he still maintains his opinion in the third edition of his *Geschichte d. Jüdischen Volkes* (1898); but I must needs think that his arguments were satisfactorily and decisively answered by Dr. Drummond in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for 1896.

One or two points in this reply of Dr. Drummond have a general bearing, relevant to our present subject.

Lucius had maintained that the treatise was of Christian origin, and that it was composed not long before the time of its first mention by Eusebius. The history of the text is opposed to this; and Dr. Drummond is quite right in saying 'the argument seems valid that Eusebius did not make his extracts from a work which had been recently sprung upon the market, but from one which had already undergone a long process of transcription.' I may point to Dr. Schmiedel's article in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* as one of many examples of reasoning similar to that of Lucius

in regard to the Fourth Gospel. It is a common thing among critics to think it unnecessary to allow any but the smallest interval between the first production of a book and the date of its first mention in the literature that happens to be extant. I would not lay down an absolute rule. Circumstances vary in different cases. But I would contend that in any case they need careful consideration, and that assumptions like those of Lucius and Schmiedel are highly precarious.

The next point I would notice is the argument from identity of thought and style. One of the striking features in Mr. Conybeare's book was the vast accumulation of parallels both in thought and expression between the *De Vita Contemplativa* and the certainly genuine works of Philo. Dr. Schürer thinks that this might be due to imitation. On that head I should like to quote Dr. Drummond:

'The purely literary evidence will affect different men differently. To those who have no difficulty in attributing to the forger a boundless power of refined imitation it will carry little weight. To others who act upon the proverb, *ex pede Herculem*, and believe that successful forgery in the name of an author, if not of high genius, at least of unusual ability and distinguished style, is an exceedingly difficult art, this line of evidence will come with almost overwhelming force. It is easy enough to imitate tricks of style, or to borrow some peculiarities of phrase; but to write in a required style, without betraying any signs of imitation; to introduce perpetual variation into sentences which are nevertheless characteristic; to have shades of thought and suggestion, which remind one of what has been said elsewhere, and nevertheless are

delicately modified, and pass easily into another subject; in a word, to preserve the whole flavour of a writer's composition in a treatise which has a theme of its own, and follows its own indepenedent development, may well seem beyond the reach of the forger, and must be held to guarantee the genuineness of a work, unless very weighty arguments can be advanced on the other side.'

This paragraph seems to be very much in point for those who, like Schmiedel, H. J. Holtzmann and Professor Bacon, would distinguish the author of the First Epistle of St. John from the author of the Gospel.

On this point it is also worth while to consider Dr. Drummond's replies to the inconsistencies alleged to exist between particular details in the *De Vita Contemplativa* and the other Philonic writings. There is always a tendency in the critical school to make too much of these little *prima facie* differences, which generally shrink a good deal on closer examination.

My last example shall be taken from the *Vita Antonii*, ascribed to, and now generally believed to be a genuine work of, St. Athanasius. The *Vita Antonii* holds an important place in the literature of the beginnings of Monasticism. As such it was involved in the wholesale scepticism on that subject which was pushed to its furthest limits by the late Professor Weingarten in the seventies and eighties. How complete the reaction has been may be seen in the recent edition of the *Historia Lausiaca* by Dom Cuthbert Butler. Among Weingarten's converts

was our English scholar, Professor Gwatkin; and I do not think that anything could speak more eloquently than just to transcribe the list of objections brought against the *Vita Antonii* by Professor Gwatkin in his *Studies of Arianism* (Cambridge, 1882). I proceed to give the more important of them in an abridged form:

'In the rest of the works of Athanasius there is no trace of Antony's existence. Considering the grandeur of the saint's position, and his intimate relations with the bishop of Alexandria, this fact alone should be decisive.'

Observe the argument from silence, which is enlarged upon in the remainder of the paragraph.

1. The treatise is addressed to the monks of the West, whereas 'monasticism was unknown in Europe in the reign of Valentinian, and at Rome in particular when Jerome went into the East in 373; and at Milan it had only lately been introduced by Ambrose at the time of Augustine's visit in 385.'

2. 'Apart from its numerous miracles, the general tone of the *Vita* is unhistorical. It is a perfect romance of the desert, without a trace of human sinfulness to mar its beauty. The saint is an idealized ascetic hero, the *mons Antonii* a paradise of peaceful holiness. We cannot pass from the *Scriptores Erotici* to the *Vita Antonii* without noticing the same atmosphere of unreality in both. From Anthanasius there is all the difference of the novel writer from the orator —of the *Cyropaedia* from the *de Corona*.'

3. 'Though Athanasius had ample room for miracles in the adventures of his long life, he never records anything of the sort. . . . But miracles, often of the most puerile description, are the staple of the *Vita Antonii*, and some of them are said to have been done before the eyes of Athanasius himself, who could not

have omitted all reference to them in the writings of his exile.'

Again, the argument from silence.

4. 'Antony is represented as an illiterate Copt, dependent on memory even for his knowledge of Scripture.' Yet he alludes to Plato, Plotinus, &c., and in general reasons like a learned philosopher.

5. 'The *Vita Antonii* has coincidences with Athanasius in language and doctrine, as we should expect in any professed work of his. . . . But the divergences are serious' . . .

6. It is implied throughout the *Vita Antonii* that the monks were extremely numerous throughout the East during Antony's lifetime. Now there were monks in Egypt, monks of Serapis, long before; but Christian monks there were none' (*Studies of Arianism*, pp. 100–2).

Now I am not for a moment going to disparage this display of learning. It is very clever; it is very scholarly: in the state of knowledge when it was written it was at least very excusable in its statements. Altogether it was as brilliant a piece of criticism as one would wish to see. To this day the objections read quite formidably. And yet the inference drawn from them is pretty certainly wrong; indeed the whole array is little more than an impressive bugbear.

With such warnings from the past before our eyes, I think we should be inclined to scrutinize rather closely arguments of a like kind when they meet us in the course of our present investigation.

### iii. *Examples of Mistaken Method as applied to the Fourth Gospel.*

At this point we may go back to Harnack's Preface. And here I cannot help expressing my regret that it has not had more of the influence that it deserved to have, both in the country of its author and elsewhere. I am even tempted to go a little further, and express my regret that it has not had more influence upon the author himself. I will henceforward confine myself more strictly to the Fourth Gospel. And it seems to me that, in his incidental treatment of this, Harnack has more than once forgotten his own precepts.

He expends endless ingenuity in trying to prove that there was a confusion, in the minds of the Christian writers of the second century, between the Apostle St. John and a certain 'Presbyter' of the same name, who really lived, as the Apostle was supposed to have lived, at Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia. An important difficulty in the way of this proof is the explicit testimony of Irenaeus. To meet this difficulty, the attempt is made to show that Irenaeus derived all his knowledge, or supposed knowledge, about St. John and his surroundings from two sources, a very brief intercourse in early youth with Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and the book of Papias, called *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord.* It is like Nero wishing that Rome had one neck, in order that it might be cut at a single stroke. By reducing the channels through which Irenaeus received his knowledge to these two, it became more possible that if

they happened in any way to lend themselves to the confusion, that confusion should really take hold of his mind and express itself in his writings. The learning and ingenuity and skill displayed are admirable. But how futile, from the very first, to suppose that all the information Irenaeus possessed about the greatest leader of the Church of his own home came only through these two channels and no others; indeed, that he was like the princess in the fairy tale, shut up in a tower and cut off from all communication with the outer world. We know that two at least of his companions in the Gallic churches of Vienne and Lyons came from the same region as himself. It is commonly supposed that these churches had as a nucleus a little colony from Asia Minor. In his Fourth Book Irenaeus often refers to a certain Presbyter, whom Harnack rightly shows to have been not a direct hearer of the Apostles, but at one degree removed from them, a disciple of those who had heard from the Apostles. It is natural, with Lightfoot, to identify this Presbyter with Pothinus, Irenaeus' own predecessor in his see, who had passed the age of ninety when he died in the persecution of the year 177. In any case, Pothinus must have been a store-house of traditions and memories, to which Irenaeus would have constant access. We know also that after the persecution Irenaeus was in Rome; and there is some reason to think that he had resided there more than twenty years before[1]. This was another great

[1] See the story in the Moscow MS. of the *Martyrium Polycarpi*

centre with which he was familiar, and to which news and traditions of the past came streaming in from every quarter of the Christian world. And yet we are asked to believe that Irenaeus was the victim of a confusion that in any number of ways might have been corrected. As Dr. Drummond well says, 'Critics speak of Irenaeus as though he had fallen out of the moon, paid two or three visits to Polycarp's lecture-room, and never known any one else. In fact, he must have known all sorts of men, of all ages, both in the East and the West, and among others his venerable predecessor Pothinus, who was upwards of ninety at the time of his death. He must have had numerous links with the early part of the century [1].'

Again the same writer says:

'The testimonies of Irenaeus, of Polycrates, and of Clement are those on which we must mainly rely. In judging of the collective force of the evidence, we must not forget that the second century was a literary age. The churches freely communicated with one another by letters, and there was an abundant theological literature of which only a few fragments have survived. I see no reason why the churches of Asia should not have had as well-grounded a certainty that John had been once among them as we have that Goldsmith was once in London [2].'

To deal with all this body of evidence as Harnack deals with it is very like 'arguing on the strength of

(Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, iii. 402), which professes to be taken from 'the writings of Irenaeus.'

[1] *Character and Authorship*, p. 348.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 213.

a few particulars in the face of clear and decisive indications [1].'

Here is another instance of the very thing that Harnack himself complained of. He has made up his mind that chap. xxi of the Gospel could not have been written until after the death of the author. But in ver. 24 the editors of the Gospel say expressly that the Apostle who figures so conspicuously in it was the author of the whole book ('this is the disciple who beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things'). This, according to Harnack, only convicts them of a deliberate untruth, contradicted by the verses immediately preceding. If we must needs accuse the unfortunate editors of falsification, we might at least give them credit for the sense to take care that their falsehood was not exposed by their own words, and almost (as it were) in the same breath. But the fact is that the premiss, from which Harnack argues, is purely gratuitous, as I hope to show in the next lecture.

Perhaps it is the same persons, the editors of the Gospel—in any case it is the Presbyters who were closely connected with them—who are charged with another piece of dishonesty. Harnack sees that mere accident will not account for the supposed confusion of John the Presbyter with John the Apostle. He therefore does not shrink from imputing deliberate fraud.

'The legend *purposely set on foot* that the author of the Gospel was the son of Zebedee, &c.[2]'

[1] *Chronologie*, p. ix. [2] *Ibid.* p. 678.

'But Papias, through the oral traditions about which he took so much trouble, already stood under the influence of Presbyters, of whom some *perhaps purposely* started the legend that the Presbyter John was the Apostle [1].'

'The John who had the encounter with Cerinthus, after what has been said can only be the Presbyter. But in the confusion, "the unconscious" alone can hardly have been involved [1].'

The dishonesty went beyond the confusion of the two persons. It is also seen in the definite ascription of the Gospel to the Apostle.

'The twenty-fourth verse of the twenty-first chapter of the Fourth Gospel, about which we have spoken, will always remain a strong indication of the fact that in Ephesus the Fourth Gospel was deliberately put out after the death of its author as a work of the Apostle, and so that the Apostle and the Presbyter were deliberately identified, as Philip the Evangelist was made to change places with Philip the Apostle [2].'

*Facilis descensus.* When once we begin imputing fraudulent actions we may very easily find that we have to go on doing so. It should, however, be remembered that the ground for all this is no assured fact, but only the exigencies of a complicated theory which, quite apart from this, has a load of improbability to contend with.

I will give one further example of a different kind. The tendency of the criticism that has been, and still is largely in vogue, is to give what seems to me quite undue weight to the exceptional, the abnormal, the

[1] *Chronologie*, p. 679. [2] *Ibid*, p. 680.

eccentric, as compared with that which is normal and regular.

In the controversy over the Fourth Gospel one of the questions has been as to the exact degree of importance to be attached to the so-called Alogi, who, about the third quarter of the second century, denied St. John's authorship of the writings attributed to him, including the Gospel, and by a piece of sheer bravado ascribed it to the heretic Cerinthus.

Harnack's account of this—coterie perhaps rather than sect—is just. 'The attack did not spread; it was soon defeated; but the memory of it lingered on, and the policy of the Church, auspiciously begun by Irenaeus, came to be that of teaching the absolute equality in rank and value of the four component parts of the Gospel [1].' But the point to which I wish to call attention is that the Church writers did not allow the existence of these Alogi to prevent them from classing the Gospel among the Homologoumena, or books about the canonicity of which all Christians were agreed. Eusebius uses strong language. He says that both the Gospel and the First Epistle were accepted without dispute by his own contemporaries as well as by the ancients (*H. E.* iii. 24. 17). And, if it is said that Eusebius was writing a century and a half after the Alogi, when that little side-eddy of opinion had subsided and been forgotten, it is not Eusebius alone who ignores their existence in this manner. Irenaeus is one of those who certainly knew about them; and yet he regards the Four Gospels,

[1] *Chronologie*, p. 695.

our present four, as a sort of divine institution, deeply implanted in the nature of things, directly presided over and inspired by Christ the Word (*adv. Haer.* iii. 11. 9). A little later Clement of Alexandria speaks of the same Four Gospels as specially handed down among Christians (*Strom.* iii. 13. 93). And, again, a little later Origen describes them as 'alone unquestioned in the Church of God under heaven' (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 25. 4). Still earlier, a contemporary of the Alogi, Tatian, gave effect to the same belief by composing his Diatessaron. And the Muratorian Fragment also endorses it.

This striking unanimity from all parts of the Christian world serves to reduce the Alogi to their right dimensions. The reason why they have bulked rather larger than they should do is, I believe, because they wielded the pen. It will be remembered that Dr. Salmon was for reducing them to the single person of Caius of Rome. Schwartz also argues that not more than a single writer *may* be meant. He thinks that in any case Epiphanius had a book before him [1]. The Alogi were in any case a very ephemeral phenomenon, chiefly significant in the history of the Canon, as marking the slight element of resistance to the establishment of the group of Four Gospels.

## II. *The Oldest Solution of the Problem of the Fourth Gospel.*

You will think perhaps that I have been a long time in approaching the direct treatment of the Fourth

[1] *Ueber d. Tod*, &c., p. 31.

Gospel. It is quite true that I have thought well to begin the approach from a distance, as it were by sap and trench, before planting my guns—such as they are. I have indeed the ambition in this course of lectures not only to state a case in regard to the Fourth Gospel, but also at the same time to contribute, if I may, to the work so admirably initiated by Dr. Drummond, of commending by the way what I conceive to be sound principles of criticism, as contrasted with others which I consider unsound. It happens that a discussion of the Fourth Gospel specially lends itself to this purpose.

In accordance with what I have been saying, you will not expect of me any new and startling theory to account for the phenomena of the Fourth Gospel. I am content to go back to the oldest categorical statement in respect to it that history has handed down to us. It seems to me that this statement, plain and direct as it is, really gives an adequate explanation, if not exactly of everything, yet at least of all the salient points that need explaining.

Eusebius (*H. E.* vi. 14. 7) has preserved for us the substance of a passage from the *Hypotyposes*, or *Outlines*, of Clement of Alexandria, which he says that Clement derived from the 'early Presbyters' (*παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνέκαθεν πρεσβυτέρων*), and which dealt among other things with the order of the Gospels. After speaking of the other Evangelists, he says that 'last of all John perceiving that the bodily (or external) facts had been set forth in the (other) Gospels, at the instance of his disciples and with

the inspiration of the Spirit composed a spiritual Gospel.'

A very similar tradition had been given by Eusebius in an earlier book (iii. 24). He heads the chapter, 'On the Order of the Gospels,' and in the course of it he writes as follows:

'Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memoirs, and they are reported (*κατέχει λόγος* [1]) to have been led to write under pressure of necessity. Matthew, having previously preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed to writing the Gospel that bears his name in his native tongue, and so by the written book compensated those whom he was leaving for the loss of his presence. And when Mark and Luke had by that time published their Gospels, they say that John, having before spent all his time in oral preaching, at last came also to write for some such reason as this. The three Gospels first written having been by this distributed everywhere, and having come into his hands, they say that he accepted them, bearing witness to their truth, but (adding) that there was only wanting to their record the narrative of what was done by Christ at first and at the beginning of His preaching.'

At this point Eusebius digresses to show that what was said was true. The first three Evangelists began the main body of their narrative after John the Baptist was cast into prison; but St. John expressly tells us that, at the time of the events related in his early chapters, John was not yet in prison. Any one attending to this, Eusebius said, would no longer

[1] On this phrase see Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, pp. 170–3.

suppose that the Gospels were at variance with each other, and would see that John had reason for being silent as to the genealogy of our Saviour's human descent, as this had been already written by Matthew and Luke, and for beginning with His divinity, as though this had been reserved by the Holy Ghost for him as one greater than they. These last are the words of Eusebius, who is very probably influenced by his recollection of the language of Clement. Unfortunately we cannot locate the rest of the tradition. It would be only a guess to suppose that it came from Hippolytus, at the time of his controversy with Caius. But in any case there is a good deal of evidence to show that the opening sections of the Gospels were being much canvassed towards the end of the second and at the beginning of the third century. The passage is in general agreement with Clement, and avoids his mistake in saying that the two Gospels containing the genealogies were the first to be written. Really Clement alone has all the essential points, which are these:

1. The Gospel is the work of St. John the Apostle—for there is no doubt that he is intended.
2. It was written towards the end of his life, after the publication of the other three.
3. The three Gospels were in the hands of the Apostle, and he had read and up to a certain point approved of them.
4. What he himself undertook to write was a Gospel, not a biography; the difference is important.

5. In contrast with the other Gospels it was recognized as being in a special sense 'a spiritual Gospel.'

I believe that these data will enable us to understand all the facts, both those which are more favourable to the Gospel and those which are in a sense less favourable.

1. The best of reasons is given for all those marks of an eye-witness which we shall see to be present in great number and strength. They point to a first-hand relation between the author and the facts which he records. If the Gospel is not the work of an eye-witness, then the writer has made a very sustained and extraordinary effort to give the impression that he was one.

2. By throwing the Gospel to the end of the Apostle's life, a considerable interval is placed between the events and the date of its composition. That means that the facts will have passed through a medium. Unconsciously the mind in which they lay will have brought its own experience to bear upon them; it will have a tendency to mix up the plain statement of what was said and done with an element of interpretation suggested by its own experience. And this will be done in a way that we should call 'naïve,' i. e. without any conscious self-analysis. The mingling of objective and subjective will take place spontaneously and without reflection. The details will not be given out exactly as they went in; and yet the writer will not be himself aware that he is setting down anything but what he heard and saw.

3. The relation of the Fourth Gospel to its predecessors accurately corresponds to that described in the tradition. On the one hand their contents are very largely assumed; and on the other hand the author does not hesitate, where he thinks it necessary, to correct them. The relation is easy and natural; it at once accounts for the selection of the incidents narrated. The author evidently felt himself at liberty to select just those incidents which suited his purpose.

4. And that purpose, it is important to remember, was not by any means purely historical. The author was writing a Gospel, not a biography in the modern sense of the word. His object was definitely religious, and not literary. He tells us in set terms what he proposed to do: 'These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name.' He did not really aim at a complete narrative of external events or an exhaustive study of a complex human character. He aimed at producing faith; and he sought to produce it by describing at length a few significant incidents, taken out of a much larger whole.

5. The previous writings that came into his hands were also Gospels; and they too were intended to produce faith. But in this direction the author of the Fourth Gospel felt that something more remained to be done. Christendom had its Gospels, but not as yet exactly 'a spiritual Gospel.' A 'spiritual Gospel' meant one that sought to bring out the divine side of its subject. When St. Paul at the beginning of the

Epistle to the Romans draws an antithesis between the Son of David 'according to the flesh' and the Son of God 'according to the spirit of holiness,' he is anticipating exactly this later contrast between the Gospels of the bodily life and of the spirit. 'Spiritual' means 'indwelt by the Spirit of God.' And it was that side of the life of Christ in which the Spirit of God was seen living and working in Him that the fourth evangelist undertook specially to describe.

If, then, it is objected that the Gospel is onesided, that it gives undue prominence to this divine side, we begin by asking what is meant by undue, what standard of measurement marks it as undue. Obviously the standard is that which we have just dismissed as altogether beside the mark, the standard of the modern biography. The Gospel does not in the least profess to do what the modern biographer does; but what the writer does profess to do, he was perfectly within his right in doing. He desired to set forth Christ as Divine. If that is to be onesided, of course he is onesided. Clement tells us why he did it. It was because he thought that the physical and external side, the human side of his subject, had had justice done to it already. In this respect the older Gospels were adequate, and he had no special wish to add to them. The one thing he did feel called upon to add, and that he knew he could add, was a fuller delineation of the divine side. He is not to be blamed for doing the very thing which he proposed.

The paragraph in Clement of Alexandria is stated by him to be derived from 'the early presbyters.'

They were a good authority; probably, if not altogether identical with the group drawn upon by Papias, yet at least in part identical with it. Papias and Irenaeus on the one hand, and Clement of Alexandria on the other, are just two branches of the same tree, or at least two suckers from the same root. That root is often called the School of St. John. It is from the School of St. John that they ultimately derive their information about St. John. What authority could be better?

It is not possible to say how far the language of Clement comes from the Presbyters, and how far it is his own. The phrase 'a spiritual Gospel' may be his own coinage, an early effort of descriptive criticism, putting into words what he felt to be the distinctive characteristic of the Gospel. In any case the phrase is a happy one; it just expresses, in the briefest compass, that which really most differentiates the Fourth Gospel from the other three.

# LECTURE III

## THE STANDPOINT OF THE AUTHOR

### I. *The Gospel is put forward as the Work of an Eye-witness.*

THERE are a number of passages in the Gospel and First Epistle of St. John which go to show that the author either was, or at least intended to give the impression that he was, an eye-witness of the Life of Christ. We will leave it an open question for the present which of these two alternatives we are to choose. And we will begin by collecting the passages, and justifying the description that has just been given of them.

The passages fall into groups; the first small but important, the others larger but, except in a few cases, more indefinite.

On the principles of criticism on which we are going, we shall assume that the Gospel and First Epistle that bear the name of St. John are by the same author, and that, so far as the authorship is concerned, what holds good for the one will hold good also for the other. The proof is not absolutely stringent. Identity of style, and close resemblance of ideas, are compatible with duality of authorship, because one writer may imitate another. But in practice, unless the reasons for laying stress upon it are strong and clear, a refinement like this may be

left out of account. Of course there is the distinction which Bacon noted between the minds that are quick to observe resemblances and those that are quick to observe differences. This question of the relation of the Gospel of St. John to the First Epistle is a touchstone by which such minds may be distinguished. I allow that the two works may be assigned to different authors[1]. I allow it in the way in which on most questions, if we attempt a nice enumeration of conditions, there is usually some remote possibility to be allowed for. The quotation from Dr. Drummond on the *De Vita Contemplativa* that I gave in the last lecture may help us to measure how remote the other possibility is. As a practical person, dealing with these questions on a practical scale, I shall venture to assume that the Gospel and the First Epistle are by the same hand. It is of course open to any one to ignore arguments based on this assumption, if he prefers to do so.

### i. *Passages which make a direct claim.*

I am treading on very familiar ground, but I must ask you to forgive me if I begin by quoting the opening words of the First Epistle:

'That which was from the beginning, that which

[1] The division of opinion in this case is among the more radical critics themselves. H. J. Holtzmann, Schmiedel, and Professor Bacon are on the one side: Jülicher, Wrede, and Wernle are on the other; and in each of these instances the opinion is thoroughly characteristic; the subtle and acute minds are ranged against those that are stronger on the side of what we should call plain common sense.

we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that our joy may be fulfilled' (1 John i. 1–3).

The *prima facie* view of this passage undoubtedly is that the writer is speaking as one of a group of eye-witnesses. But there are two ways in which this inference is turned aside.

1. Harnack[1] and some others take it as referring not to bodily but to mystical vision.

2. Others, again, think of the writer as speaking in the name of a whole generation, or of Christians generally.

In regard to the first of these explanations we note that the word θεᾶσθαι is used twenty-two times in all the New Testament, including the present passage; and in every one of bodily and not of mental or spiritual vision. And whatever sense we may put upon seeing or hearing, it is difficult to explain such a strong expression as 'that which . . . our hands have handled,' where the writer seems to go out of his way to exclude any ambiguity, in any other sense than of physical handling.

In regard to the second explanation we observe

[1] *Chronologie*, &c., p. 676.

that there is a contrast between 'we' and 'you,' between teachers and taught. The teachers are in any case a small body; and they seem to rest their authority, or at least the impulse to teach, on the desire to communicate to others what they had themselves experienced. I have therefore little doubt that the *prima facie* view of the passage is the right one. The writer speaks of himself as a member of a small group, like that of the Apostles, but a group that may include all who had really seen the Lord and who afterwards took up the work of witnessing to Him.

The other passage, John i. 14, is more ambiguous: 'the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.' If this had stood alone, it might have seemed an open question whether 'we beheld' was not used in a vague sense of Christians generally—or even of the human race, as 'tabernacled among us' just before might mean 'among men.' But the more specific reference would be more pointed; and it is favoured by the analogy of the passage of which we have just been speaking as well as of those which follow.

In both the above cases the writer is speaking in his own person. This is not quite so clear in xix. 35, where, after describing the lance-thrust and the pierced side, the narrative goes on, 'And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he (ἐκεῖνος) knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.' Is the writer by these words objectifying, and as it

were looking back upon himself, or is he pointing to some third person unnamed in the background? Both views are antecedently possible. Perhaps the latter is more consistent with the ordinary use of ἐκεῖνος. If we accept it, then I should be inclined to think with Zahn that ἐκεῖνος points to Christ. It would be just a formula of strong asseveration, like 'God knoweth' in 2 Cor. xi. 11, 31, &c. There would be a near parallel in 3 John 12, 'Demetrius hath the witness of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.' This view is the more attractive because it is in keeping with the habit of thought disclosed in the Gospel. As the Son appeals to the witness of the Father, as it were dimly seen in the background, so also it would I think be natural for the beloved disciple to appeal to the Master who is no longer at his side in bodily presence, but who is present with him and with the Church in spirit: 'he who saw the sight has set it down in writing . . . and there is one above who knows that he is telling the truth.'

This is the view that, after giving to it the best consideration I can, I am on the whole inclined to accept. I could not, however, agree that there is anything really untenable in what may he called the common view, that the asseveration is of a lower kind, and that the author is simply turning back upon himself and protesting his own veracity. The use of ἐκεῖνος to take up the subject of a sentence is specially frequent and specially characteristic of this Gospel; and as the author systematically speaks of himself in

the third person, it seems to me that the word may also naturally refer to himself so objectified: 'he who saw the sight has set it down . . . and *he* is well assured that what he says is true.'

In any case, however, I must needs think that the bearing witness is that of the written Gospel, and that the author of the Gospel is the same as he who saw the sight. The identity is, it seems to me, clenched by xxi. 24, to which I shall come back in a moment.

At this point I may be permitted to interject a speculation—shall I call it a pious speculation? it certainly does not profess to be more—as to the origin of the peculiar way the Fourth Evangelist has of referring to himself. The idea can only be entertained by those who think that the writer was really a companion of the Lord, either an Apostle or one very near to the Apostles. Is it not possible that such a one may have been influenced by the way in which the Master referred to Himself? It is characteristic of the Synoptic Christ that He constantly speaks of Himself objectively as 'the Son of Man.' May we not suppose that the Evangelist, through long and familiar intercourse, came insensibly and instinctively to adopt for himself a similar method of oblique and allusive reference? It is of course not quite the same thing; but there seems to be enough resemblance for the one usage to suggest the other. The beloved disciple had a special reason for not wishing to obtrude his own personality. He was conscious of a great privilege, of a privilege that would single him out for all time among the children of men. He could not

resist the temptation to speak of this privilege. The impulse of affection responding to affection prompted him to claim it. But the consciousness that he was doing so, and the reaction of modesty led him at the same moment to suppress, what a vulgar egotism might have accentuated, the lower plane of his own individuality. The son of Zebedee (if it was he) desired to be merged and lost in 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'

There is nothing in the least unnatural in this; it is a little complex perhaps, but only with the complexity of life, when different motives clash in a fine nature. The delicacy of attitude corresponds to an innate delicacy of mind. When one reads some of the criticisms on this attitude, one is reminded of a sentence in an English classic, Cowper's indignant remonstrance at Johnson's treatment of Milton.

'As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot [1].'

Samuel Johnson, excellent person as he was, is not the only critic who has had the misfortune to be born (metaphorically, if not physically) with a 'great foot' and a heavy hand.

The Gospel closes with a scene in which the writer refers in his usual oblique way to himself. I cannot think that there is any real reason for the assumption, which is so often and so confidently made, that the last chapter is an appendix written after the author

[1] Letter to the Rev. William Unwin, dated Oct. 31, 1779.

was dead. On this point, again, I entirely agree with Dr. Drummond, 'It is surely conceivable that the aged disciple, feeling death stealing upon him, might point out that no words of Jesus justified the expectation which had arisen among some of his devoted friends [1].' The complete identity of thought and style, and the way in which this last chapter is dovetailed into the preceding ('This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples'; compare at the beginning of the Gospel the counting up of the first Galilean miracles, ii. 11, iv. 54), seem to prove that the last chapter is by the same hand as the rest of the Gospel [2].

But at the very end another hand does take up the pen; and this time the writer speaks in the name of a plurality; 'This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true' (xxi. 24). The critics who assert that the Gospel is not the work of an eye-witness, and even those who say that the last chapter was not written by the author of the whole, wantonly accuse these last words of untruth. That is another of the methods of modern criticism that seem to me sorely in need of reforming. I hope that a time may come when it will be considered as wrong to libel the dead as it is to libel the living.

I accept, then, this last verse as weighty testimony to the autoptic character of the Gospel. It is easy to see that the two concluding verses are added on the

[1] *Character*, &c., p. 387.

[2] For the proof see especially Lightfoot.

occasion of its publication by those who published it. They, as it were, endorse the witness which it had borne to itself.

### ii. *Passages in which the impression conveyed is indirect.*

We have been through the few salient passages which, in spite of the criticism to which they have been exposed, still proclaim in no uncertain terms the first-hand character of the work to which they belong. I now go on to collect a number of passages which are more indirect in their evidence, and just because of this indirectness have a special value, because the evidence which they afford is unconscious and undesigned. For the present I shall speak only of two groups: first, a series of passages in which the author seems to write as though from the inner circle of the disciples and companions of Jesus; and, secondly, another series in which he refers to the way in which impressions received at the time were corrected or interpreted by subsequent experience and reflection.

The Gospel has not long opened before we begin to receive that subtle impression which is given when one who has himself taken part in a scene reproduces it as history. I know that this kind of effect may be produced by imagination; and I will not assume as yet that it may not be so produced in this instance; I content myself for the present with pointing out that it exists.

When we take the last two paragraphs of the first chapter of the Gospel (i. 35–51), I think we shall feel

as though we were being introduced to a little circle of neighbours and acquaintances. Two friends, one of whom is called Andrew, and the other is unnamed, are interested in what they have seen of Jesus and in what the Baptist had said about Him, and they ask leave to join Him. They remain for some hours in His company; and it is clear that their interest is not diminished. Andrew finds his brother Simon, and he too is brought up and introduced. Jesus Himself takes the initiative in inviting a fourth, Philip. We are told expressly that Philip was from the same city as the two before named; and he in turn finds and introduces his friend Nathanael. There is just one of the five whose name is not given. He is the silent spectator in the background. What if it were he to whom we owe the story? In any case there is this little group, all apparently from the same locality, who naturally enough find themselves together, drawn at first by the preacher of repentance, but leaving him to join one greater than he.

We pass over to the next chapter; but that will give us more to say under the next head. There are many points upon which we might pause, but I will pass on to the middle of chap. iii (vers. 22–6). There we have the description of what have now become two groups, the disciples of Jesus and the disciples of John, in near proximity to each other, and with easy intercourse between them. The narrative seems to be written from the standpoint of the disciples. The two principals are in the background, but we follow the events of the day among their *entourage*.

There is a little discussion between some of John's disciples and a stranger (R. V.) about a question naturally connected with baptism. Such a discussion might have interested at the time one who was near at hand and in friendly relation with those who took part in it. But it would be hard to find any other motive that could suggest it to a Christian at the end of the first century.

It is indeed quite possible and perhaps probable that Baldensperger (*Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums*, Freiburg i. B., 1898) is right in supposing that among the motives present to the mind of the Evangelist was that of marking the subordinate position of the Baptist as compared with the Messiah, to whom he bore witness. We can quite believe that at Ephesus, at the time when the Gospel was written, there still remained some who had only been baptized into the baptism of John, like the disciples mentioned in Acts xix. 1–7. There may be a certain amount of polemical or apologetic reference to such a sect as this. The latter part of chap. iii ('he must increase, but I must decrease') may be of this character; but the purely historical statements in vers. 22–6 have in them nothing polemical; they have far more the appearance of personal reminiscences, introduced only because they came back to the memory of the writer. It is a curious fact that the Gospel contains several references to 'purifying': e. g. ii. 6 (the waterpots at Cana 'set there after the Jews' manner of purifying'), the present passage, iii. 22; the description, in xi. 55, of the Jews going

up to purify themselves before the Passover, and the statement (xviii. 28) that the accusers of our Lord did not enter the praetorium 'that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.' Nothing is made of these allusions; no argument is based upon them; but they would be very natural if the Evangelist began life as a disciple of the Baptist and had been early interested in such questions.

Turning to the discourse with the woman of Samaria we observe how it is framed as it were in the movements of the disciples: in ver. 8 they go into the city to buy provisions; in ver. 27 they return, and are surprised to find their Master engaged in conversation with a woman—contrary to the practice and maxims of the Rabbis. They are surprised, but they do not venture upon any remonstrance. They had left their Master weary and way-worn, and they find Him refreshed. They do not understand how refreshment of the mind carries with it that of the body; and they speculate as to whether food had not been brought to Him during their absence. This is another scene in which the point of view seems to be that of the disciples, and in which we, as it were, overhear their comments.

It has often been objected that there were no witnesses of the discourse with the woman, and therefore that the narrative of it must be imaginary. It is full of touches, as we shall see presently, which are so appropriate to the circumstances that I find it difficult to think of them as imaginary. But how do we know that there were no witnesses of the dis-

course? It would certainly be too much to assume that every allusion to the disciples in a body meant of necessity the whole number of the Twelve. We must remember by the way that the Twelve were not yet chosen; but in any case we must expect language to be rough and approximate. If we are really to think of the author of the Gospel as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' we should doubtless be right in assuming that the love was ardently returned. We may think of the Apostle as a youth, only just out of boyhood, and with something of the fidelity of a dog for his master, who does not like to be long out of his sight. '*Sicut oculi servorum in manibus dominorum suorum, sicut oculi ancillae in manibus dominae suae*': we may picture to ourselves this gentle youth seated a pace or two away, and not wishing to obtrude his presence, but eagerly drinking in all that passed.

In chap. v, the disciples are not prominent; but in chap. vi, before the feeding of the multitude, we have one of those little dialogues which are so characteristic of this Gospel, bringing in two of the disciples who are both mentioned by name (vi. 5–10). At the end of the chapter (vers. 60–71) we are again taken into the midst of the circle of the disciples. We see some perplexed, and some falling away, and an echo reaches us of St. Peter's confession. At the same time we have a premonitory hint, such as we may be sure that other members of the Twelve recalled after the fact, that one of their number was a traitor.

About chap. vii I shall have occasion to speak

later. I will only now point to the discussion with which it begins between Jesus and His brethren (vers. 3–8). This again—if it is not pure invention—is only likely to have been reported by one who was in the closest intimacy, not only with the disciples of Jesus but with His domestic circle. And again we have to ask, what motive there could be for invention. If the Gospel gives examples of belief, and tries to promote belief, it does not on that account suppress examples of unbelief, even among the nearest relations. This episode is St. John's counterpart to Mark iii. 21: 'His friends (*οἱ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ*) . . . went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.'

The next occasion on which we are reminded of the intimate personal side of our Lord's ministry is the story of Lazarus. Here we have two groups, into the interior of which we are allowed some glimpses. The family at Bethany is one, the company of the Twelve is the other. Here once more we see what passed from within. The passage, vers. 7–16, is full of delicate portraiture. We have the remonstrances of the Twelve as a body; moving in a higher plane than these, we have the divine insight which sees what they cannot see, and knows what it will do; and lastly, we have the impulsive, despondent, faithful Thomas—a figure so clearly drawn in the few strokes that are allotted to it—fully recognizing and perhaps exaggerating the dangers, and yet not letting its loyalty yield to them: 'Let us also go, that we may die with Him.'

Parallel to this description of what passed among the Twelve is the description further on of the interior of the household, the different behaviour of the two sisters and their Jewish sympathizers. If this is not a picture constructed wholly by art, it represents the recollections of one who had himself been present at the events of the day, and who had moved freely to and fro, and very probably talked them over after the day was done.

A natural sequel to this scene is the supper in the same house six days before the Passover. And, as we might expect, the attitude and standpoint of the narrator are still the same. He shows the same intimacy with the members of the household and with his own companions. He remembers the ungenerous short-sighted speech of Judas Iscariot, to whom, with natural antipathy, he attributes the worst motives.

The incident of the coming of the Greeks, with its accurate singling out of the two friends Philip and Andrew and the account of the part played by them, also reflects the standpoint of a bystander who is near the centre.

Still more does this come out in the whole narrative of the Last Supper. One or two episodes stand out as specially graphic and life-like. The first is the whole description of the Feet-washing (vers. 3–12). The other is the indication of the traitor (vers. 21–30).

Bishop Lightfoot noticed long ago the careful use of terms in this last passage. In the book by which he prepared the way for the undertaking of a Revised

Version of the New Testament, happily accomplished ten years later, he called attention to the defects of the Authorized Version of John xiii. 23, 25:

'[It] makes no distinction between the reclining position of the beloved disciple throughout the meal, described by ἀνακείμενος, and the sudden change of posture at this moment, introduced by ἀναπεσών. This distinction is further enforced in the original by a change in both the prepositions and the nouns, from ἐν to ἐπί, and from τῷ κόλπῳ to τὸ στῆθος. St. John was reclining on the bosom of his Master and he suddenly threw back his head upon his breast to ask a question.'

After referring also to xxi. 20, Dr. Lightfoot adds:—

'This is among the most striking of those vivid descriptive traits which distinguish the narrative of the Fourth Gospel generally, and which are especially remarkable in these last scenes of Jesus' life, where the beloved disciple was himself an eye-witness and an actor [1].'

It has been objected that too high a place is given to the 'beloved disciple,' and that the stress laid on this is a mark of egotism. But Bishop Westcott has shown (*ad loc.*) that this criticism rests on a mistaken view of the order of precedence. The place of honour was in the centre, and the guests reclined on the left side. Peter occupies the second place behind his Master. The beloved disciple has the third place, where his head would naturally be in his Master's bosom. When we realize this all the details of the narrative become plain.

[1] *On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament* (1871), pp. 72, 73.

What we have said of the Last Supper applies also to the last discourses which followed upon it. There too we have the same distinct recollection of persons, of the questions put by each, and the replies which they received. Thomas and Philip stand out in the dialogue of xiv. 4–9. But what is perhaps still more noticeable is the careful specification of Judas (not Iscariot), a disciple otherwise obscure and of little prominence, in ver. 22. If this is art, it is art that is wonderfully like nature. We notice also the disciples' comments, evidently spoken in an undertone, in xvi. 17.

What could be more easy or more natural than the description of Gethsemane in xviii, 1, 2, and the explanation that it was a familiar haunt of Jesus and His disciples? This is just such a reminiscence as we might expect from one who had been himself a disciple.

There is an 'undesigned coincidence' in the fact that the unnamed disciple is described as being 'known to the high priest,' and that the Gospel, of which he may be presumed to be the writer, alone gives the name of the high priest's servant, whose ear Peter cut off, as Malchus, and alone knows that one of the servants who questioned Peter was his kinsman (xviii. 10, 15, 26). It was apparently because the unnamed disciple was a privileged person, that he was not called upon to give an account of himself as Peter was.

We need not go the whole length of the way with Delff, and may yet feel sure that it is not an accident that this same disciple, who is so much at home in the high priest's house, should also have special know-

ledge of persons like Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, both members of the Sanhedrin.

Other portions of chaps. xviii and xix will come before us in other connexions. The important passage xix. 34, 35 has already been discussed in part, and we shall have to return to it later. The whole of chap. xx is really significant for our purpose. It is a record of events that immediately followed the Resurrection, and is told throughout from the point of view of the disciples. The delicate precision of the narrative is specially noteworthy in vers. 3–10, where again we have the unnamed disciple in the company of St. Peter. The story is briefly told, but there is enough detail to let us see the different characterization of the two men. We shall not be wrong in thinking of the unnamed disciple as the younger of the two, indeed in the first flush of youth. He is fleet of foot and outstrips his companion; but he is also of a finer and more sensitive mould, and when he reaches the tomb a feeling of awe comes over him, and he pauses for a moment outside. The impetuous Peter has fewer scruples, and he hurries at once into the tomb, and makes his examination of its contents. The spell is broken, and the young disciple also enters. I shall have a word to say later of the effect on both disciples of what they see.

In the rest of the chapter the reader, with the author, is drawn a little aside and allowed to witness the events one by one; first, the appearance to Mary Magdalene, and then the two appearances to the collected disciples, when Thomas is absent and afterwards when he is present.

A like point of view appears in the next chapter. The narrator is himself never far away from the events he is recording. Towards the end of the chapter he is pushed forward into a prominence that is only faintly disguised. In the scene on the lake there comes back to him the feeling that had first passed through his own mind as well as those of his companions. They did not recognize the figure that in the grey dawn called to them from the shore. The instinct of love was the first to awake that sensitive quick perception: the old parts are again repeated; it is the unnamed disciple who speaks and Peter who acts. But the two are friends; and presently, when Peter has been rather hard pressed by his Lord's searching inquiry and the prophetic forecast with which it ends, a sudden impulse leads him to turn the conversation to his companion. He would fain have the forecast extended to him. His interest, or curiosity, is baffled by an ambiguous reply. And here, once more, the writer steps in to prevent a wrong inference being drawn from its ambiguity.

So far we have been following a series of passages which place us at the standpoint of the disciples at the time of the events of which they were witnesses. The writer for the moment revives in himself, or seems to revive, the old impression. If it is not a spontaneous recurrence to the past, it is at least successful in giving the appearance of spontaneity.

But there is another class of passages where the procedure is rather more complex; where the writer not only throws himself back into the past, but also

looks back upon the past in the light of his subsequent experience. There is no better example of this than the very first that meets us:

'And to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house shall eat me up. The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said' (John ii. 16–22).

Here we have two allusions to the disciples as 'remembering' something that had happened, and combining it in their minds with an idea of interpretation. Bishop Westcott distinguishes between the two occasions. He thinks that the expulsion of the buyers and sellers recalled to the disciples at once the passage of the psalm (Ps. lxix. 9): he thinks that they applied it to the act while it was going on. On the other hand ver. 22 is explicit to the effect that the disciples did not bethink them of the saying, and see what they conceive to be the meaning, until after the Lord was risen from the dead. I am not so sure that any contrast is intended. The tense (ἐμνήσθησαν) in the first instance is indefinite, and allows us to think that the application of the psalm was an after-thought;

and the attitude of mind which was on the watch for fulfilments of scripture came later. However this may be, in the second instance at least, we clearly have what professes to be a bit of autobiography—autobiography in which the writer speaks for his fellows as well as himself.

Exactly similar to this is the comment on the Triumphal Entry, and the passages of Scripture which it too recalled:

'These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him' (xii. 16).

It is an apt description of a process that we may be sure was constantly going on in the minds of the first disciples. It is a rather different kind of allusion when at the Last Supper the Lord explains to Peter in reference to the washing of the disciples' feet, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.' This points to the interpretation which was to come, not so much from Scripture as from experience and reflection.

The last discourses contain many passages of this latter kind. Their general character is prophetic; but the writer and his companions had lived to see the prophecies fulfilled. It is very natural, and we cannot be surprised if the effect of the fulfilment is traceable in the form given to the prediction. The spirit in which the writer looks back upon the events that happened after the Resurrection is that expressed in

xiv. 29, 'And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe.'

Here is a retrospect: 'They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. . . . But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you' (xvi. 2, 4).

And this is another: 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone' (xvi. 32).

A later stage of the Apostles' experience is reflected in the following: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of her child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world. And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you' (xvi. 20–2).

The great salient fact that stood out in the experience of the first disciples was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and its effect upon themselves. This is vividly reflected in a series of passages:

'These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world

giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful' (xiv. 25–7).

'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning' (xv. 26, 27).

'Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you' (xvi. 13, 14).

It might be said that these passages are a summary sketch of the mental history of the Evangelist from the day of Pentecost onwards. They show him to us looking back upon the eventful time through which he had passed with ever broadening intelligence. They contain the whole secret of the way in which he came to write the 'spiritual Gospel.'

I am aware that the probative force of the phenomena which I have been reviewing will be differently estimated. I should myself not have laid so much stress upon them if they had stood alone, or if they had occurred in a different class of literature. The novel writers and imaginative biographers of the present day make a point of keeping up the illusion of only allowing the supposed author to use the language appropriate to the exact situation in which he is placed at the time when he is conceived to be writing. But the writers of the first century A. D. were not so scrupulous, and what is natural to us would be

very unusual with them. Still I do not deny that a writer whose habit of mind it was to throw himself back into an assumed position, might by the exercise of a special gift have been able to keep up the position so assumed. But in the case before us, we have the instances which I began by quoting where the author claims for himself or others claim for him that he is recording what he had himself heard and seen. This at once puts in our hands a far simpler and easier hypothesis, a hypothesis which really makes no demands upon our constructive powers at all. Whereas it is probable that not one ancient in a thousand, or one in ten thousand, would have written as the writer of the Fourth Gospel has done, if he had not been an eye-witness; it would have been only the natural way for him to write, if he had been an eye-witness. This latter hypothesis therefore seems much preferable to the other. It is confirmed by the really remarkable consistency with which the point of view is carried out, and by another large class of phenomena which will come before us in the next lecture.

### II. *The Identity of the Evangelist.*

Before we pass on, however, it may be convenient at this point to consider, on the assumption that the author of the Gospel was really an eye-witness of the events, what are the indications as to his personal identity. If we confine ourselves to those contained in the Gospel itself, it would not follow with any stringency that he was the Apostle John the son of Zebedee. The portion of the Gospel that contributes

most to the identification is the last chapter, the scene by the Sea of Galilee, where we are expressly told that the sons of Zebedee were present (xxi. 2). But we are also told that there were two other disciples of whom the author of the Gospel may have been one. If we begin by supposing—and the supposition is very natural—that in order to stand in the intimate relation in which he appears to have stood to Christ, the author must have been an Apostle, then by a process of elimination we should arrive at St. John; and it is no doubt an important fact that in this way internal and external evidence would converge upon the same result. But if we look at some sides of the internal evidence, and bring in only a select few of the indications from without, another hypothesis that has been actually put forward would have great claims upon our attention. It is not on the face of it certain that 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' must have been one of the Twelve. He may have been what might perhaps be called a sort of *supernumerary* Apostle. I mean that he may have been one who although, perhaps on account of his youth, not actually admitted to the number of the Twelve, yet had all—and even more than all—of their privileges. We have been led to think of the beloved disciple as a youth who, so far as he could help it, never left his Master's side. We should only have to subtract a couple of years, and the young Apostle of eighteen or twenty would become a stripling—highly favoured, though not an Apostle—of sixteen to eighteen, or even fifteen to seventeen.

I am not sure that this point of the youthfulness that may be attributed to the beloved disciple was much brought out by the author of the theory. And yet it would be a real advantage. We are told that the John who wrote the Gospel lived till the time of Trajan (i. e. till 98 A. D.). In that case, if he were born about 11 or 12 A. D., he need not have been more than eighty-six or eighty-seven at the time of his death; the main body of the Gospel might quite well have been written (probably from dictation) eight or ten years earlier, and the Appendix (chap. xxi) added when the writer felt his strength beginning to fail. All these would be quite reasonable dates; whereas if the writer was a full adult in the years 27–9, that would make him rather old by the end of the century. We must keep down the dates as much as we rightly can.

But it is time that I gave a fuller account of the theory of which I am speaking, as it was put forward by its author—in some ways a rather eccentric person—the late Dr. Delff of Husum. I will try at the same time, as well as I can, to balance the arguments for and against it.

Dr. Delff is not content with distinguishing the beloved disciple from the Apostle. For him the former is no Galilean at all but a native of Jerusalem; he is not a fisherman, but a member of the higher aristocracy, not only acquainted with the high priest but himself belonging to one of the high-priestly families. It was through this connexion that Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, came to make the remark-

able statement about him that he wore the frontlet or golden plate (*τὸ πέταλον*) of the high priest (Eus. *H. E.* iii. 31. 3).

It will be seen that this is a bold reconstruction; but in this case the boldness has a good deal of justification. There are a number of very tangible data which the theory works up into a coherent whole.

i. The theory might be said to take its start from John xviii. 15, 'And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest.' It is natural to suppose that the unnamed disciple here is the same whose presence is hinted at so mysteriously throughout the Gospel. But, if that is so, the relation in which he is said to stand to the high priest explains at once a series of facts. It explains how it was that the Evangelist came to know that the name of the high priest's servant, whose ear had been cut off, was Malchus; and also how it was that he came to recognize one of those who questioned Peter as a kinsman of this Malchus. It explains again the special information that the Evangelist seems to have about Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, who is mentioned by name in three different contexts in the Gospel. Along with this it would explain the special information which the Evangelist also seems to possess as to what went on at meetings, and even secret meetings, of the Sanhedrin. We have a graphic account of the debate at one such meeting in vii. 45–52, and again in xi. 47–53; and the Gospel has some precise details not found

elsewhere as to the part played by Annas, as well as Caiaphas, in the preliminary examination of our Lord.

This whole group of facts is in any case one of which we must take notice. In any case it forms an important element in the portrait that we are to construct for ourselves of the Evangelist, even if we suppose him to be the son of Zebedee. There is no antecedent reason why Zebedee and his sons should not have had friends, and even friends in high places, in Jerusalem. It would seem that Zebedee himself was a person of substance: he has 'hired servants' with him in the ship, and Salome—if that is the name of his wife—was one of those who contributed to the support of Jesus and His disciples. We must also remember that the practice of a trade or handicraft was not held to be derogatory among the Jews as it was among the Greeks and Romans. There is, however, also the other possibility that the acquaintance of the Evangelist with the high priest is not to be taken too strictly, but that it meant rather acquaintance with some member of his household. The account of what happened to Peter might well seem to be told from the point of view of what we should describe as the servants' hall.

ii. Another set of phenomena which Delff's theory at once explains is the extent to which the Gospel is concerned with events that happened in Jerusalem and Judaea. Delff himself carries out this with a logical severity that hardly seems necessary. He cuts out all the Galilean incidents in the Gospel as later insertions. Even so he cannot he quite thorough

enough, because he leaves the latter half of chap. i, which introduces to us the unnamed disciple in the company of Andrew and Peter, natives of Bethsaida. This disciple and Peter were evidently friends: they lodged together in Jerusalem (xx. 2) and go together to the tomb, and they each take an affectionate interest in the other (xxi. 20).

This last point is in agreement with the way in which Peter and John are found acting together in the other Gospels and in the Acts (Mark v. 37, &c.; Acts iii. 1, 11; iv. 13; viii. 14; cf. Gal. ii. 9). On the other hand the scene at the foot of the cross (John xix. 26, 27) would seem to be rather in favour of the Jerusalem theory, especially if we are to connect the words, 'And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own (home),' with the tradition that John had a house in Jerusalem.

iii. In another direction Delff's theory fits in well with some portions of the patristic evidence. We have seen how it would account for the curious expression used by Polycrates (*circa* 195 A. D.). Delff thinks that the beloved disciple must have actually performed the functions of the high priest. The high priest only wore his full dress on the Day of Atonement, but on an emergency his place might be taken for him by a substitute; and it is in this capacity that John of Ephesus is supposed to have acted. That does not on the face of it appear very probable; but we can more easily conceive that in the early days, before liturgical details were settled, and when the Christian Church had not yet wholly outgrown its

Jewish antecedents, one who had the blood of high priests in his veins might on some solemn occasion (e. g. at Easter) have assumed a part of his distinctive dress.

iv. Yet another alleged point in the testimony of Papias would be explained on this theory, and is not easily explained on the view which identifies the John who wrote the Gospel with the son of Zebedee. Since the publication of De Boor's Fragment (Cod. Barocc. 142[1]) we have two authorities instead of one for the express statement that Papias in his second book asserted that both the sons of Zebedee were 'slain by the Jews.' When attention was first called to this statement, the tendency among scholars was to explain it away, to suppose that there had been some corruption of the text, or some confusion between John the Baptist and John the son of Zebedee. Of course there may have been something of the kind; and yet the statement is quite explicit as it stands, and one does not like emending away just the words that cause a difficulty. Hence there is an increasing tendency among scholars to regard the statement as having some real foundation. Schwartz, the editor of Eusebius, has lately put forth a monograph[2], the whole

[1] *Texte u. Untersuch.* v. 2, p. 170. The other authority is a single MS. (but the oldest and most interesting) of the ninth-century writer Georgius Monachus or Georgius Hamartolus (ed. De Boor, p. 447 [Ἰωάννης] *μαρτυρίου κατηξίωται*, where the other MSS. have *ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἀνεπαύσατο*). The question of the relation of the texts is judiciously discussed by De Boor (Preface, pp. lx–lxxi), but the fuller statement of particulars is reserved for a third volume.

[2] *Ueber den Tod der Söhne Zebedaei* (Berlin, 1904).

argument of which turns on the assumption that the statement is true. If it were true, the prediction of our Lord in Mark x. 38, 39, will have been literally fulfilled: both the sons of Zebedee will have suffered 'red martyrdom,' and not one red and one white. Wellhausen is among those who think that this was probably the case.

v. Now Schwartz assumes that if John perished by the sword like his brother James, he did so at the same time and at the hands of Herod Agrippa I, in the year 41. Of course he can only do this by throwing over the data in the Acts, which I do not think that he is warranted in doing. I have little doubt that the John who was still a pillar of the Church at the time referred to in Gal. ii. 9 was the son of Zebedee. But it is quite credible that he may have perished, if not at the same time as James the Elder, yet about the same time as James the Brother of the Lord, or in the troublous times which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem.

vi. If the younger son of Zebedee had died in this or some other way, there would be nothing to prevent us from supposing that the John who took up his abode at Ephesus was the beloved disciple. And it would really simplify the history, and make everything more compact, if we could suppose that the beloved disciple, and the John who wrote the Gospel and Epistles, and the John who appears to have called himself, and to have been called by others 'the Presbyter,' were one and the same person.

vii. It is a remarkable fact that some of our best

authorities, while they leave no doubt as to the identification of the John who figured so conspicuously at Ephesus with the beloved disciple, abstain from expressions that would identify him with the son of Zebedee. Irenaeus most often calls him 'the disciple of the Lord,' which we remember is the very phrase used by Papias of the Presbyter. He also more than once describes him as having lain upon the breast of the Lord, but he nowhere (I believe) speaks of him as one of the Twelve or as the son of Zebedee. Polycrates uses the same designation, 'John who lay upon the breast of the Lord'; and the Muratorian Fragment speaks of him as 'one of the disciples': but neither of these witnesses ever calls him an Apostle. Irenaeus, however, does perhaps hint at this title where he says that the Church at Ephesus, 'having been founded by Paul, and John having resided among them until the time of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the Apostles' (Eus. *H. E.* iii. 23. 4). Clement of Alexandria also and Tertullian unequivocally call John an Apostle.

viii. If these expressions had stood alone, there need be no great difficulty. We may be pretty sure that the beloved disciple, even if he had not been one of the original Twelve, would be called an Apostle in the wider sense, like St. Paul and St. Barnabas and James the Brother of the Lord. And it would be only natural that he should seem to step into the place of the older John (on the hypothesis of his martyrdom), just as James the Lord's Brother in a manner stepped into the place of the older James.

It is worth while to bear in mind that the title 'Apostle' was used more freely in the early days of the Church than we are in the habit of using it. It was not till about the end of the second century that (except in the case of St. Paul and St. Barnabas and one or two others) it came to be as a rule narrowed down to the Twelve. In the earliest usage of all the word had its proper meaning of 'one who is sent on a mission.' But this usage was gradually lost sight of, and it took the place of the primitive *μαθητής*.

In view of this history of the terms, it will be understood how easily one who was in the position of the beloved disciple would come to be spoken of as an Apostle, and in time to be confused with the older Apostles who bore the same name. In such a process there would be no need, as Harnack does, to bring in the hypothesis of fraud; every step in the process would be really innocent and natural. Harnack of course gets into his difficulties by minimizing the designation 'disciple of the Lord' as applied to John the Presbyter, who is also John of Ephesus. One who stood to the Lord in the relation of the beloved disciple would have a right to the name Apostle which the Presbyter, as Harnack conceives him, would not.

ix. So far it would seem that a really strong case can be made out for distinguishing the Evangelist from the son of Zebedee and identifying him with the beloved disciple. My wish is not to make out a case either way, but to state the facts as impartially as I can.

From this point of view, there seem to be two serious difficulties in the way of Delff's hypothesis.

The first is that it puts asunder two sets of phenomena that we feel sure ought to be combined. We have seen that the Gospel represents the beloved disciple and St. Peter as close friends. And we have also seen that the other Gospels, the Acts and, we might add, the Epistle to the Galatians, represent St. Peter and St. John as constantly acting together. It may indeed just be said that this joint action is a sort of official relation, which is a different thing from the private friendship implied in the Gospel. And yet we cannot doubt that the more natural and obvious view would be to regard the later relation as the direct continuation of the earlier, and so to identify the beloved disciple with the leading Apostle. Delff's theory would make two pairs, who would be too much the doubles of each other.

x. And another difficulty, or set of difficulties, turns round the statement of De Boor's Fragment. It is certainly strange that this statement appears in no other early authority, and especially that no hint of it is found in Eusebius. I am not sure that this would weigh with me so much as it would with others, because I always discount the argument from silence, even where it is apparently strong, as it is in the present instance.

But there is something more than silence. The common tradition of the church did not ascribe to St. John a violent death. And we cannot escape the inference by saying that the common tradition relates

to John of Ephesus and not to the son of Zebedee; because the earliest authority for the tradition, the Apocryphal Acts of John, a second-century work, without any ambiguity identifies the two.

xi. We might perhaps sum up the whole case thus.

The Life of the Evangelist falls into three periods: first, the period covered by the Gospel in which he appears as the beloved disciple; then, at the end of his career, the period during which he appears as John of Ephesus: and, between these two, the period of some forty years which connects them together. Now we might say of Delff's theory, that it gives a quite satisfactory account of the first period, and also in most ways of the last, and that in particular it enables us to work in the statement as to the death of the two sons of Zebedee; but that its difficulties come out chiefly in regard to the connexion between the first stage of the history and the last.

On the other hand, the common view gives what I think is really on the whole as good an account of the first period, and raises no special difficulties as to the second, but it does leave some obscurities which with our present knowledge it is difficult to clear away as to the third. And it also leaves the alleged statement of Papias an enigma for which we have no certain solution.

At the same time, although the cohesion is on either view not quite complete, it is in each case far too complete to be rejected in the interests of an agnosticism which only presents no target for objections because it has no tangible form or substance.

# LECTURE IV

## THE PRAGMATISM OF THE GOSPEL

### *Different Kinds of Precision in Detail.*

I HOPE the title that I have given to this lecture is not an affectation. The word 'Pragmatism' is more common in German than in English. In English it is chiefly used as the name for a particular kind of philosophy which lays stress upon conduct or practice rather than theory. But we want the word, or something like it, in criticism as well as in philosophy. We want a word which shall express a tendency in a given writer or a given book, without begging any questions as to the relation between this tendency in the mind of the writer and the facts that he professes to describe; I mean the tendency to throw his thoughts into the form of concrete pictorial history, whether that history is real or imagined. It is in this sense that I use the word: I use it to describe a very marked characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, the abundance of detail—to all appearance precise detail—with which it presents its pictures. But I do not as yet say anything further as to the nature of this detail or the inference to be drawn from it.

One of the most uncompromising critics of the Gospel[1] calls this apparent precision, more especially in the notes of place and time, a 'trump-card' in the

[1] Wrede, *Charakter und Tendenz d. Johannesevangeliums* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1903), p. 25.

hands of the defenders of the Gospel. He goes on to give a meagre list, just of some of these notes of place and time, and nothing else. His only comment on them is that they 'fail to impart to the presentation life, colour, and movement.' As though life, in the sense of active life, and movement were the only guarantees of reality. It is true that St. John is not what we should call a dramatic writer; his narrative has not rapidity of movement. He is contemplative rather than energetic, and yet he has a quiet intensity of vision that is in its way not less valuable. He must be judged according to his type: we do not (e. g.) apply to a Maeterlinck the same sort of measure as to a Stanley Weyman.

Wrede's is a specimen of what I consider poor criticism. It is in striking contrast to that which Dr. Drummond has devoted to the same subject. Dr. Drummond discusses in his judicial manner this phenomenon that I have called 'Pragmatism.' He begins by noting how the writer 'specifies particular days, for no apparent reason except that he remembered them, and sometimes even mentions the hour. He often names the disciple who was the speaker, even when the remark is not of great consequence.' We have said enough on this part of the subject. But he not only specifies times and persons but also places, with which he connects various incidents, 'frequently for no discoverable reason beyond the fact itself.' Then again there is, generally speaking, the graphic character of the work. On this Dr. Drummond has some discriminating remarks:—

'The Gospel is sometimes spoken of as though it were a monotonous unfolding of the Logos doctrine, and brought before us a number of shadowy puppets, marked by no distinguishing features. I cannot but think that this view is partly owing to the prepossession of critical dogmatism, but partly also to the identity of style and tone which, wherever you may open the book, at once betrays the author. The simplicity is not the simplicity of Genesis or Homer, in which we forget all but the persons and events that are brought before us; the dramatic power is not that of Shakespeare, in which the author is hidden behind his own creations. On the contrary, everything seems more or less transfused with the individuality of the writer; and I think this fact sometimes causes us to overlook the wonderful variety of character that passes before us, and the graphic nature of some of the descriptions, which imprints the scenes for evermore on the imagination' (*The Character and Authorship*, &c., p. 376).

I am not sure that we might not say that, so far as the narrative is concerned, the simplicity is really like that of Genesis: there is a Biblical style of narration, which descended down the centuries, and which the writer has thoroughly assimilated. But then his own personality must be added to this, and there was much more in his mind besides the impulse of simple narration. It is, as we shall see, the discourses, and especially the longer discourses, in which this personal element comes out most strongly, and which make it seem so dominant. But Dr. Drummond is certainly right in laying stress on the 'variety of character that passes before us, and the graphic nature of some of the descriptions.'

But when he has said this, Dr. Drummond turns round upon himself, and proceeds to discount the inference that might be drawn from these characteristics of the Gospel. While allowing that they fit in excellently with the external evidence, he will not urge them as an independent proof of authorship, because 'the introduction of names and details is quite in accordance with the usage of Apocryphal composition.'

This is true, and the examples given are quite to the point. The Apocryphal Gospels and Acts are plentifully sprinkled with names. We observe, however, that names of places are somewhat less common than names of persons; and where there is any real precision in the use of place-names, an inference in regard to the author may often be fairly deduced from it, and as a matter of fact has in a number of cases been successfully so deduced [1]. It would be unsafe to draw a conclusion simply from the presence of precise details. But all details are not alike; and when they come to be critically tested, they will soon be found to fall into two classes—one that admits of verification and is valuable, and the other that is soon exposed as worthless.

One of the parallels for the Fourth Gospel specially put forward from this point of view was the Apocryphal Gospel of Matthew, and I took some little pains to test this in the pages of the *Expositor* (1892, pp. 172 ff.). It was quickly found to teem with anachronisms and

[1] An excellent example is the treatment of the Acts of Paul and Thecla by Professor W. M. Ramsay in *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 375–428.

confusions. Professing to describe the circumstances of the birth of the Virgin Mary, it spoke of her father's almsgiving in terms borrowed from the practice of the Christian Church. There were supposed to be schools for girls in the Temple, modelled upon the convent schools of the fifth century. The father and mother of the Virgin were represented as meeting at the 'Golden Gate' of the Temple. A gate bearing that name may be seen at the present day; but it probably owes its name to a corruption (*aurea* = *ὡραία*); and though the modern gate, which can be traced back to the time of Heraclius, is supposed to represent the Beautiful Gate of Herod's Temple, it certainly occupies a different position. The Gospel contains a developed legend of the Descent into Egypt, which is also garnished with topographical details. These, however, cannot be worked into a consistent itinerary, and an official title introduced into the story belongs rather to the period after Constantine than to the time of Augustus.

Does the Fourth Gospel present anything at all analogous to this? One or two mistakes have been attributed to the author which are not seriously maintained at the present time. The only supposed anachronism that does not stand refuted is one recently put forward by Furrer the eminent geographer. In an interesting article on the topographical data in the Gospel[1] he gives them in general the praise of accuracy. He himself, however, regards the Gospel as a work of

[1] 'Das Geographische im Evangelium nach Johannes,' in the *Zeitschr. f. neuttest. Wiss.*, 1902, pp. 257–265.

the second century, and he sees an indication of this in the name 'Sea of Tiberias' for 'Sea of Galilee' or 'of Gennesaret.' Dr. Furrer points out that this last form ('Sea of Gennesar' or 'Gennesaritis') is found in the writers of the first century, while 'Sea of Tiberias' became the regular designation in the second century, and from that time onwards. It is found in the Greek writer Pausanias (who wrote in the middle of the century, under Hadrian and the Antonines), and consistently in the Talmud. We may observe that in any case the Gospel was written quite late in the first century; and the way in which the name is introduced the first time it is mentioned would seem to point exactly to the period of transition from the one form to the other. John vi. 1 runs thus: 'After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias' (*πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς Γαλιλαίας τῆς Τιβεριάδος*). There is perhaps something a little awkward and unusual in the apposition, which, however, does not justify the striking out of one of the two names as a gloss, against all the authorities [1].

Another point made by Furrer is that in xii. 21 Bethsaida is called 'Bethsaida of Galilee,' whereas, according to Josephus, Galilee ended with the right bank of the Jordan, and Bethsaida is on the left bank. Josephus, however, is by no means precise in his usage, as he twice speaks of Gamala as in Galilee, which is much further away on the other side of the lake.

[1] Cf. Drummond, p. 366 f.; and the writer's *Sacred Sites of the Gospels*, p. 95.

Professor von Dobschütz treats as an anachronism the allusions (John ix. 22; xii. 42) to expulsion from the synagogue as practised upon the followers of Jesus during His lifetime. But this is surely very gratuitous. Partly the argument goes upon the assumption that the extreme penalty must have been always inflicted. Partly it seems to imply that excommunication was too great a punishment for the disciples, at the very time when death itself was threatened against the Master.

I hardly know whether I ought to mention as a fourth example that is at the present time seriously alleged, the notion that the phrase 'being high priest that year' (xi. 49, 51), is derived from the fact that the Asiarch acting as high priest in the worship of the Emperor held office for a single year[1]. It is far more probable that the phrase is connected with the deep sense which the writer of the Fourth Gospel shows of the significance of particular times. I take it to be the counterpart of the often recurring words, 'the hour had not yet come,' 'the hour is come.'

So that the four precarious examples really shrink up to one, the first, and that is explainable without any straining. There is no anachronism; but at the time when the Evangelist wrote the usage was changing, and he was aware of this, and expressed the fact in his text.

And now let us consider what there is to be said on the other side—*for* the Gospel from this same point

[1] H. J. Holtzmann, ad loc., and *Einleitung*, ed. 2, p. 469: cf. Drummond, p. 437 f.

of view of truth to a particular period. Is the Fourth Gospel in the main true to the period which it professes to describe?

This is a question that should not be difficult to answer. It should be less difficult than in the case of most periods, because as a rule one period shades gradually and imperceptibly into another, and there is a more or less prolonged transition. But the history of Judaism and Christianity in the first century of our era is not like this. There we have one great catastrophe standing out in the boldest possible way and dividing what goes before from what comes after. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus completely altered the conditions of Judaism, and altered no less the conditions of Christianity both in itself and in relation to Judaism. We have to remember that Judaism as it existed up to that date—from the time of Josiah to the year 70 A. D.—had been the most centralized religion of the ancient world. Its system of worship, its hierarchy, and what remained to it of self-government, all had a single centre in the holy place and the holy city, the temple and Jerusalem. It is true that there was the newer institution of synagogues, which was destined to play such an important part in the Judaism of the future; but this was as yet quite subordinate, existing side by side with the temple worship, but not consciously regarded as a substitute for it.

Now with one single stroke the whole of this temple system, the hierarchy, and the Sanhedrin, as hitherto constituted, came to an end. It was not

that it went on with modifications, but it was destroyed root and branch.

At the same time Christianity broke loose from Judaism more thoroughly than it had ever done before. Henceforth the dominant forces in the Church were Gentile, not Jewish. In particular the last shreds of the idea of a political Messiah were thrown off.

These considerations supply us with abundant means of testing the picture of the time that we have in the Fourth Gospel. We can easily determine whether its features correspond to the state of things in the first half of the first century or at its end. What we have chiefly to ask ourselves is, does the Fourth Gospel presuppose a centralized religion or a decentralized? We may discuss this in relation to (i) the pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the Jewish feasts; (ii) the detailed ceremonies connected with those feasts; (iii) the temple itself; (iv) the state of sects and parties; (v) the Messianic expectation.

### i. *Pilgrimages.*

It is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, as compared with the common matter of the Synoptics, that it alone represents our Lord as making a number of pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the express purpose of attending the Jewish feasts. The Synoptic narrative mentions only a single Passover at the very end of our Lord's public ministry, which led to His arrest and death. St. John mentions three Passovers as falling in the course of the ministry: one soon after it may be said to have begun, one in the middle, and one at

the end. Beside this there is an unnamed feast in v. 1; there is a Feast of Tabernacles which our Lord attends in vii. 2, 10; and the Feast of Dedication is expressly mentioned in x. 22.

It is somewhat surprising that Dr. Drummond, who takes in general so favourable a view of the Fourth Gospel, should seem to be in doubt as to these visits and these feasts, and should sum up rather against them[1]. I must not stay now to go fully into the question of their historical character, which will come before us again. But, speaking broadly, I may point to the improbability that a pious Jew, within the Holy Land and not a member of the Dispersion, would neglect to attend the feasts for so long a time and in the course of a religious mission addressed directly to his countrymen. I must needs think it wholly improbable. And apart from this improbability, we should have to account for the determined hostility of the authorities at Jerusalem, which had manifested itself before the last Passover, and which came to a head in proposals of betrayal so soon after its victim had set foot in Jerusalem.

However this may be—and I reserve the fuller discussion for the present—in any case it must be allowed that the narrative of the Fourth Gospel is in the strictest accordance with the religious customs of the time to which it relates, and not in accordance with those at the time when the Gospel was written. We must at least set down this fact as markedly to its credit.

[1] pp. 42–6.

ii. *Ceremonies.*

The effect of this is heightened when we further observe that the feasts are more than once not mentioned barely, but with some little allusion that agrees well with what we know of them from other sources.

I will not lay much stress upon what is said of the first Passover in chap. ii, because it might be thought that the account of the cleansing of the Temple is simply derived from the Synoptics, although in them it appears at a later period. It is, however, worth while to point out the specially graphic delineation in the Fourth Gospel (the upsetting of the money-changers' piles of coin, and the address to the sellers of doves, whose commodities could not be overturned or driven out). Little touches of this kind acquire an increased importance from the fact that the marketing in the temple courts, even if it survived the drastic treatment described in the Gospel, in any case did not survive the events of 70 A. D.

There is nothing very special in connexion with the unnamed feast; and the Passover of vi. 4 is mentioned only by the way. But in the account of the Feast of Tabernacles there is a precise touch in vii. 37, 'on the last day, the great day of the feast.' This shows accurate knowledge, because the last day was kept as a sabbath with an 'holy convocation' (Lev. xxiii. 36). Whether, as many have supposed, our Lord's words on this day ('If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink') were suggested

by the libations of water from Siloam poured out during the feast, is a question of association that is hardly capable of proof, but may be true [1].

There is nice accuracy in the picture presented by xi. 55–7:—

'Now the passover of the Jews was at hand: and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves. They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast? Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should shew it, that they might take him.'

The strictest ritualistic purity was required of those who took part in the feast. 'Every man,' said R. Isaac, 'is bound to purify himself for the feast' (Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* ad loc.). The purifying might take quite seven days, and during this time the pilgrims to the feast would be standing about and often conversing among themselves, and the rumours of the day would circulate freely among them.

There are several pointed allusions in the Gospel to the laws of Levitical purity. The mention of the water-jars at the miracle of Cana is one; the dispute of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying is perhaps another; we have just had a third; and a fourth is in xviii. 28, where the Sanhedrists are prevented from entering the *praetorium*, in order not to incur defilement, and so be prevented from eating the passover [2].

[1] It is denied by Holtzmann, but approved by Westcott.

[2] For a discussion of the nature of this defilement see Chwolson, *Das letzte Passamahl Christi*, p. 56 ff.

These allusions are really, if we think of it, very striking. They fit into the narrative with perfect ease and appropriateness; and they are admirably natural if the author of the Gospel was really St. John, a Christian brought up as a Jew, and even as it would seem in some way personally connected with the priesthood, who had been himself in the company of Jesus, had himself held intercourse with disciples of the Baptist, and himself moved about among the crowds and heard their comments. It is a wholly different thing if we are to suppose that all these touches were thrown in by a Christian of the third generation, who could only arrive at them by study and imagination.

Chwolson says expressly: 'After the destruction of the Temple all the regulations about cleanness and uncleanness, which were closely connected with the sacrificial system, fell into disuse [1].'

The last instance that I will notice is xix. 31, which is full of the same truth of detail.

'The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.'

The exact nature of the 'high day' will depend upon the day of the month, which is disputed. I have little doubt that on St. John's reckoning it would be Nisan 15, the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which was to be marked by an 'holy convoca-

[1] Op. cit. p. 49.

tion' (Lev. xxiii. 7), and which, coinciding with the sabbath, would make it a double sabbath. It would also be the day for the offering of the peace-offering or Chagigah. This would be on the Saturday morning: when the Jewish day began (at sunset on Friday) the Jews would be engaged on the paschal meal.

### iii. *The Temple.*

The references to the Temple in the Fourth Gospel are marked by the same minute accuracy.

There is a remarkable allusion in ii. 20, where we might paraphrase the force of the aorist by saying in our own idiom, 'it took forty-six years to build this temple.' The calculation is exact, though we must suppose the word for temple (*ναός*, 'the holy place') to be used somewhat loosely. The building of the Temple appears to have been begun about 20–19 B.C. The holy place or sanctuary proper is said to have been finished in eighteen months; but the whole complex of buildings was not finished till the reign of Nero. Reckoning forty-six years from 19 B.C. we should come to 27 A.D., which suits the chronology of the Life of Christ as well as any date could do. It seems, however, very improbable that the date was arrived at by any elaborate process of calculation. We are in the midst of a multitude of examples of the precise and accurate detail which is characteristic of the Gospel; and the most natural explanation seems to be that the actual words used stuck in the memory of the Apostle, and were reproduced by him just as they were spoken.

There are two other close specifications of locality in connexion with the Temple. One is the mention of 'the treasury' in viii. 20. The name 'treasury' (*γαζοφυλάκιον*) was given to the thirteen boxes with funnel-shaped openings which stood round the women's court. This court was not confined to women, and was used indifferently by both sexes; but it was the point beyond which women were not allowed to pass.

The other part of the Temple mentioned is 'Solomon's porch' in x. 23. It is explained that Jesus was walking here because of the season of the year. The time was the Feast of the Dedication, which was held late in December, when those who walked in the open court would be exposed to snow or rain.

These points relating to the Temple are of more importance, because at the time when the Gospel was written the Temple was a heap of ruins, which had long ceased to be frequented for worship, and of which an accurate knowledge could hardly be expected except from a few Rabbinical students, like the author of the tract *Middoth*, and those who had used the Temple before its destruction.

### iv. *Sects and Parties.*

The fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. made a great change in the ecclesiastical organization of the Jewish people. During the life of Christ this too had been highly centralized. Both the great parties of Pharisees and Sadducees—especially the latter—had their head quarters in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the seat of the

Sanhedrin, in which both parties were represented—the Sadducees in the numerical majority and with the control of executive power, but the Pharisees in closer touch with the people and with the stronger religious influence. In the Gospel we have traces of both parties and in both characters, official and extra-official.

We meet first with the Pharisees, and that in rather peculiar circumstances, but in circumstances which we may be sure existed. We are expressly told (i. 24) that the deputation sent to cross-examine John the Baptist as to the nature of his mission was sent from the Pharisees. Only one party was represented upon it, so that it cannot have been sent by an act of the Sanhedrin as a whole. From the religious point of view the Pharisees would be far more interested in the Baptist and his doings than the Sadducees. At the same time the deputation consisted of official persons ('priests and Levites from Jerusalem,' i. 19), who would carry with them a certain authority. Of the nature of their questions we shall have to speak presently.

In this part of our subject we are a little entangled in cross-division, because the same sections of the narrative are interesting in more ways than one. Chap. vii in particular will meet us under several heads; but there is just one section of it that I must ask leave to quote in full, as containing in a small compass a sketch that seems drawn from the life of the Sanhedrin and its ramifications.

'The officers therefore came to the chief priests

and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring him? The officers answered, Never man so spake. The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed. Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them), Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet' (vii. 45–52).

The 'chief priests' in this Gospel correspond to the Sadducees in the Synoptics; the chief priests and Pharisees together make up the Sanhedrin. This body had its own servants and apparitors, whom it sent to arrest Jesus; and their report is discussed in a debate which we may be sure exactly reproduces the kind of thing that actually happened. 'Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?' 'But this multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed.' 'Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?' 'Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.' It is a perfect specimen of the kind of speeches that would be made, and the kind of answers that would be given.

We again get an interior view of the meeting of the Sanhedrin in xi. 47–50. 'The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and

our nation. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.'

Here we are introduced to the politics of the time. 'The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation' was exactly the fear which constantly haunted the minds of the Sadducean aristocracy, but is expressed in such general terms as would appeal most to the Pharisees as well. The haughty Caiaphas makes a speech which, as reported to the Evangelist, he interprets in a sense that was very possibly not that of its author. The high priest may have meant only that as an act of policy a single individual might be made a scapegoat. But the Evangelist, who is himself a true prophet, has so strong a sense of divine overruling in all that happened and of divine inspiration taking hold of men without their will, that he sees in the words a profounder meaning than they were intended to have, though not perhaps than they really had in the counsels of God and to an insight like his own.

Another example of the same attitude of mind meets us a little lower down in another passage that has the same strong marks of verisimilitude.

'They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the palace: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this

man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die' (xviii. 28–32).

There is an often-quoted statement in the Talmud to the effect that the Jews lost the power of capital punishment forty years before the great siege. The Evangelist sees in this a providential appointment designed to verify the Lord's words, and that His death might take the Roman form (crucifixion) and not the Jewish form (stoning).

There is a singularly fine characterization in the whole narrative of the Trial. Take for instance the following:

'Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgement-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar' (xix. 12–15).

The Roman had sufficient sense of justice not to wish to condemn an innocent man. But the accusers

of Jesus have a weapon that they use against him mercilessly. They know that he was not in the best odour at Rome. His administration of his province through his own wilfulness and harshness, had not been very successful. It was in the later days of Tiberius; and Tiberius thought something of the welfare of the provinces, but thought still more of having in office instruments on whom he could depend for strict subservience to himself. The accusers play their part with cynical adroitness: 'If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend;' 'We have no king but Cæsar.'

### v. *Jewish Ideas and Dialectic*

We are in search of hints and allusions appropriate to the time. The evidence is overwhelming that the author of the Gospel was a Jew, and (as I think) also a Jew of Palestine. The best critics admit this, and it is hardly worth while to stay to prove it; indeed it is incidentally proved by a large proportion of the examples I am giving. But it is of more importance to prove that the author was a contemporary of the events he is describing. Now I will not say that the points I am going to urge exactly prove this. They do, however, I believe, justify us in saying that if the author was really an Apostle, a member of the original Twelve, or closely associated with them, the indications in the Gospel entirely correspond with such a position. If the author was not an Apostle, then he must either have been in a position extremely similar to that of the Apostles,

or else he must have taken great pains to convey the impression that he was in such a position. The passages I am about to adduce all reflect with great vividness a state of things like that which must have existed in the time of our Lord.

There is just one period in which the Christian Church stood in a relation to Judaism which it never occupied again: that was in its origin. Christianity arose out of the bosom of Judaism. The first disciples reached manhood as Jews; they were witnesses of the process by which Christianity gradually broke loose from Judaism; they themselves underwent a process of conversion; their ideas were modified little by little as they went on, and in the end the new displaced the old. But they had been as familiar with the attitude of their Jewish opponents as they were with their own; they knew the arguments to which the Jews appealed, the prejudices by which they were animated, the language that they used. I repeat, there was one period to which this description applied, and never another in the same degree. The Fourth Gospel is full of instances of this. Let us turn to some of them.

The earlier chapters have been drawn upon rather freely in other connexions: we will therefore begin with chap. iv. How perfect is the local colour of the story of the Samaritan woman![1]

[1] It is very surprising that Freiherr Hermann von Soden, in a pamphlet published at the end of the year, *Die wichtigsten Fragen im Leben Jesu* (Berlin, 1904), p. 9, should deny the existence of local colour in the Fourth Gospel. In proof he mentions some half-dozen points that occur in the Synoptics but not in this Gospel; which only means that it is of a different type from the other three,

'The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Samaritan woman? . . . The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?' (iv. 9, 11, 12).

The standing feud between Jews and Samaritans is notorious, and does not need illustrating. 'The well is deep' in the most literal sense; the actual depth is about 75 feet. But how appropriate and natural is the appeal to the patriarch Jacob, and the local tradition about him!

and does not repeat what was already found in them. And yet, even of these points, several come back in another form. It is true that the Gospel does not describe the healing of a demoniac, but it has many marked allusions to demoniacal possession (see below, p. 134). It is true that it has not the name 'Sadducees'; it speaks of them rather as 'chief priests'; but it is well acquainted with their character and policy (see above, p. 126 ff.). The Gospel has no 'elders,' but it has 'rulers' or members of the Sanhedrin, whose position it perfectly understands. In like manner it has no *νομικοί* or *νομοδιδάσκαλοι*, but it is fond of the title 'Rabbi,' and it makes pointed reference to Rabbinical training (see below, p. 132). The whole page of criticism, coming from a writer of such eminence, is most disappointing. Either the statements are very questionable as fact or they have not the slightest bearing on the authorship of the Gospel. Why should not an Apostle break off somewhat abruptly in his report of a discourse, or glide imperceptibly from narrative into comment? That is just what St. Paul does, as we shall see (p. 168, below).

The truth is that the criticism of the Fourth Gospel on the liberal side has become largely conventional; one writer after another repeats certain stereotyped formulae without testing them. It is high time that they were really tested and confronted with the facts.

'The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things' (vers. 19–21, 25).

The natural impression of the discourse to which she was listening upon the woman would be that her interlocutor was a prophet. And her first impulse would be to put to Him the burning question which divided Jews and Samaritans—Was the true centre of worship to be sought in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizinm? It was at one time contended that the Samaritans had no Messianic expectation; but that is now given up. The Samaritans not only had such an expectation, but have it to the present day.

The Jews at Capernaum in chap. vi apply the Pentateuchal history in very much the same way as the Samaritan woman. Some of our modern critics, who have a keen eye for anything to which exception can be taken, and who do not appreciate the simplicity which is not peculiar to St. John but characteristic of the Biblical narrative generally, will say that here we have a 'schematism,' a stereotyped formula, which shows poverty of invention. On the contrary, I would describe it as a touch of nature so ingrained in the Jewish habit of mind that it was sure to recur, and harmonizes thoroughly with the historical situation.

Chap. vii is full of the kind of materials of which we are in search; but the greater proportion of them we will reserve for our next head. I must, however, just refer in passing to the expression of the Jews' surprise, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' (ver. 15). It is just what would excite the astonishment of the populace that one who seemed to be a simple peasant, and had not been a student in any of the current Rabbinical schools, should yet show himself so well able to deal with the profoundest questions that the Rabbis were in the habit of discussing. This seventh chapter places us in the midst of a society which, with only a slight difference of method, reminds us of the restless curiosity with which we are told that Alexandrian Christians canvassed the metaphysical problems involved in the Arian controversy. In Palestine the dominant influence was Rabbinism; the one idea that the people had of learning was Rabbinical learning; and so entirely did the 'scribes and Pharisees' cover the ground that the appearance of a teacher who was neither scribe nor Pharisee was sure to be remarked upon.

A little lower down we have exactly the kind of argument to which the Jewish people were accustomed.

'The multitude answered, Thou hast a devil: who seeketh to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel. For this cause hath Moses given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath

ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?' (vers. 20–3).

I do not think it can be doubted that arguments like this were just what would be constantly heard at the first beginnings of Christianity. But they belong to the time when it was just in the act of differentiating itself from Judaism; and I cannot easily imagine that they would be so clearly realized and so appropriately introduced later.

Of the same kind is much of the discussion in ch. viii. I do not undertake to say that this discussion, or other discussions in the Fourth Gospel, are given exactly as they really happened. I am quite prepared to believe that especially the part in them taken by our Lord Himself was a little different from that which He is represented as taking. But, if I think this, it is because the narrative seems to me (if it is not too much of a paradox to say so) even too true to the time and circumstances in which the discussion took place. No doubt our Lord is represented as holding Himself apart from and above the Jewish controversialists. I feel sure that He did this; but, with the Synoptic Gospels before me, I suspect that He did it in a slightly different, i. e. in a more reserved and—if I may be forgiven the expression—delicate way.

With thus much of preface I will just give a specimen of what I mean by truth to the time and circumstances.

'The Jews answered and said unto Him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me. . . . The Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, if a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?' (vers. 48, 49, 52, 53).

'Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil'; 'Abraham is dead, and the prophets.' These are exactly the things that would be said, and that we may be sure were said. But I am not satisfied with the hypothesis that the author who wrote them was a Jew of Palestine. I believe that he was, and must have been, an actual contemporary and eye-witness of what he is recording.

The same conclusion forces itself upon us all through the next chapter, which is steeped in Jewish ideas and customs; and those not Jewish ideas and customs in the abstract, but in direct and close connexion with the Jewish controversy as it existed in the time of our Lord and centring in His person. I single out a few of the verses that illustrate this most vividly.

'And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. . . . Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them. . . . He therefore

answered, Whether he be a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples? And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out' (ix. vers. 1–3, 16, 25–34).

Notice in this the following essentially Jewish ideas: The connexion of sin with physical infirmity, and the speculation as to how far back, in a particular case, this connexion went—whether it was confined to the individual affected himself, or whether it went back to his parents; the observance of the sabbath as indispensable to one who really had a divine mission; in reply to this, the plea that none but a righteous man could work miracles; the relation of discipleship, and the claim of the Pharisees to be in the strict sense Moses' disciples; and finally, the characteristic abuse of one who bore in his body the mark of having been born in sin, and yet presumed to teach

doctors of the Law; for such a one expulsion from the synagogue was a fitting penalty [1].

### vi. *The Messianic Expectation.*

We have already more than once come across allusions to the Messianic expectation as it existed in the time of Christ. But there are a few examples of this to which it is well that we should direct special attention.

The first is the series of questions put to the Baptist by the deputation which came to test the nature of his mission. They ask him who he is, and he expressly denies that he is the Christ. Is he then Elijah? He replies that he is not. He is once more asked if he is the expected prophet like unto Moses; and to this too he answers, No. His questioners draw the natural inference, and call upon him to explain what is his authority for administering this new rite of baptism, if he had none of these credentials. Thereupon he discriminates between his own mission and that of his greater successor.

It may be contended that this passage was suggested by two parallel groups in the Synoptics, the speculations of Herod Antipas as to our Lord—that He is the Baptist risen from the dead, or Elijah, or a prophet (Mark vi. 14–16; Matt. xiv. 1, 2; Luke ix. 7, 8), and the preliminary of St. Peter's confession, when the disciples are asked by their Master as to the common opinion about Him and they reply that some supposed Him to

[1] On the application of this penalty in the lifetime of Christ, see above, p. 115.

be the Baptist and others Elijah, and others again, one of the prophets (Mark viii. 27, 28; Matt. xvi. 13, 14; Luke ix. 18, 19).

There are doubtless the two possibilities: the questions attributed to the deputation in St. John, if we suppose that the author was really remote from the events, would be suggested by passages like these; if he was an eye-witness, it would be more probable that they were taken directly from the life, or at least from the personal knowledge of the writer that such ideas were commonly entertained at the time. There are several reasons for thinking that this latter hypothesis is the easier and less artificial. To suppose that the scene was a literary invention would involve the adaptation to the Baptist of what was originally said of Christ. It is also against the supposition that the questions are borrowed from the Synoptists, that in one important point they run directly counter to the Synoptic tradition. When the Baptist is asked if he is Elijah, he says that he is not, whereas the Synoptists persistently identify him with Elijah, and that upon the authority of Christ Himself (Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 10–13; Mark ix. 11–13). There is another noticeable divergence. In St. John the question relates to '*the* prophet,' with direct reference to Deut. xviii. 15, 18; in the Synoptists the phrase used is 'a prophet, as one of the prophets,' or 'one of the prophets.' These are the forms of the phrase in St. Mark, which is fundamental. On the second occasion St. Matthew substitutes 'Jeremiah or one of the prophets'; on both occasions St. Luke has

'one of the old prophets is (was) risen again.' The difference between the two versions is rather marked, though no doubt the Synoptic idea ultimately goes back to Deut. xviii, like the other. For these reasons the hypothesis that St. John is drawing from the life seems distinctly preferable.

Allusion has already been made to some of the popular ideas and to the meeting of the Sanhedrin in chap. vii. That chapter is especially important from our present point of view, that of the Messianic expectation. We see there reproduced with wonderful vividness just such an undercurrent of criticism as we may be sure was constantly going on, particularly in Jerusalem.

'Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is.'

'But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?'

'Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there arose a division in the multitude because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.'

'They answered and said unto him, Art thou also

of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet' (vers. 25–7, 31, 40–4, 52).

It is to be observed that several of the points in the expectation thus depicted are of a somewhat recondite character. 'We know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is.' This point can be verified, at least approximately. There is a Jewish saying that 'three things come wholly unexpected, Messiah, a god-send, and a scorpion[1].' And Justin Martyr alludes to another tradition, that the Messiah would not even know his own mission until he was anointed by Elijah[2]—the idea of this was perhaps suggested by the anointing of David.

Again we note that the writer assumes the point of view of the crowd, according to which Christ was regarded as coming from Nazareth in Galilee, though in any case he had before him the First and Third Gospels which placed His birth in Bethlehem. Not a hint escapes the Evangelist of his knowledge of this, although the point is brought as an objection to our Lord's Messianic claims. In other words, the Gospel reflects the real state of things in A. D. 28, not the Christian beliefs of A. D. 90. We have to say the same of the test applied by the Sanhedrin, that a prophet was not to be looked for from Galilee.

All these points agree beautifully with the time when Jesus was moving about with His disciples among His countrymen, a time of which the genuine recollection must have been long lost to all those

[1] *Sanhedr.* 97 a. [2] *Dial. c. Tryph.* § 8, cf. 110.

Christians who had not themselves actually lived in it. The same comment would have to be made upon the language in which the Evangelist more than once refers to Christ's mission, or rather the popular conception of it. In vi. 15, the people are represented as coming to take Him by force and make Him king; and at the entry into Jerusalem He is greeted as the King of Israel, and the prophecy of Zechariah is applied to Him, 'Behold thy King cometh, &c.' In all this there are evident traces of the unreformed Messianic idea, as associated with political domination. By the year 90 all such ideas must have entirely vanished, and it must have required an effort of mind to recover them which one who had not been himself connected with the events would have had no incentive to make.

I am greatly mistaken if the mass of particulars collected in this lecture does not come home to the mind with great, and even overwhelming, force. In me at least it inspires, and has always inspired ever since I took up the study of the Gospel, a strong conviction that it could only be the work of one who had really lived through the events that he describes. Perhaps there is a little exaggeration in the phrase that it 'could only be' such a one. It is the kind of rough approximate phrase that one is apt to use for practical common-sense purposes. Strictly speaking, there is the other alternative, of which we ought not wholly to lose sight, that the author was a second-century Christian, perhaps of

Jewish descent and with some Jewish training, who by a *tour de force* threw himself back into the circumstances of the time and had a wonderful success in reproducing them. Dr. Drummond reminds us that there is this alternative.

'It is sometimes said that to produce an untrue narrative possessing such verisimilitude as the Gospel would have been quite beyond the capacity of any writer of the second century: such an author would be without example; such a work would be a literary miracle. In making this allegation people seem to forget that the book is in any case unique. Whether it be true history, or the offspring of spiritual imagination, or a mixture of both, no one, so far as we know, could have written it in the second or any other century, except the man who did write it; and to assert that an unexampled, unknown, and unmeasured literary genius could not have done this or that appears to me extremely hazardous' (p. 378 f.).

Perfectly true; there doubtless is the possibility that 'an unexampled, unknown, and unmeasured literary genius' could have done what we find. But as a rule, where facts can be explained easily and naturally without having recourse to any such extraordinary assumption, the world is content so to explain them. The practical question is a balance of probabilities. And even now, as in the days of Bishop Butler, probability is the very guide of life.

# LECTURE V

## THE CHARACTER OF THE NARRATIVE

THE last lecture called attention to a multitude of little points that seem to lead to a definite conclusion. They almost all belonged to the framework, or setting of the narrative, and not to its salient features. I was conscious, not seldom, of stopping short just where we seemed to be coming to something of more importance, and to which exception would be more likely to be taken. I stopped short deliberately and of set purpose, because I am myself of opinion that from the point of view of critical method, it is just these small incidental details that are most significant. They are the sort of details that an author throws in when he is off his guard. From them, far more than from his laboured arguments, we may tell what is his real standpoint and attitude. In regard to the abundant details which we have examined, the Evangelist had plentiful opportunities of tripping; but in no single instance is he really convicted of doing so, whereas in a vast number his record has been verified.

Taking this ample verification of details with the direct claim considered in the last lecture but one, we have reached a point at which the authentic character of the Gospel, its claim to come from an eye-witness if not from an Apostle, seems to be really well assured. But the question that now meets us is, how far this

assurance is neutralized by the arguments brought against the Gospel from a comparison of it with the Synoptics and from certain points of general probability. It is true that there are differences, which may amount to discrepancies, between the Fourth Gospel and its predecessors.

There is, however, this preliminary remark to be made, before we discuss the differences in detail, that whatever we may think in regard to them, in any case the result must in one respect be favourable, and not adverse, to the Gospel; it must be favourable at least to its independence and authority. For there are two things to be noticed in regard to these differences.

i. The Evangelist had the Synoptic Gospels before him; and, where he differs from them, he does so deliberately. Either his intention is to correct them, or at least he deliberately goes his own way.

It follows that he was a person who was conscious of writing with authority. If he had not been, and if he was only desirous of insinuating his own views under cover of a great name, we may be pretty sure that he would have kept closely to the lines already marked out by works that had a considerable vogue and a considerable reputation.

ii. And we are confirmed in this opinion by the further observation that the points on which he differs from his predecessors are for the most part and to all appearance indifferent for any particular purpose that he seems to have had in writing. He has certainly not gone out of his way to exploit or insist upon them. For anything that we can see the only reason that he

had for his divergences was that to the best of his belief and knowledge the facts were really as he has stated them, and not otherwise.

## I. *Alleged Discrepancies with the Synoptic Narrative.*

### i. *The Scene of the Ministry.*

One of the most obvious differences between the Synoptic and the Johannean narrative is that the scene of so much of the latter is laid in Judaea and Jerusalem.

The first comment that we have to make upon this is that the difference is not really so great or so significant as it seems. From both sides it is subject to some discounting, from the side of St. John as well as from that of the Synoptics.

I have already alluded to the fundamental mistake that is so often made of judging the Gospel as though it were not a Gospel, but a biography. If the author had been writing a biography like (e. g.) Mr. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, he would have felt himself bound to cover the whole of the ground. He would have had to sketch the whole of his hero's career. He would have had to observe a due proportion between its different parts. If the hero had spent part of his life in England, and part of it in the Colonies, each of these should have had justice done to it. But the author of the Gospel was under no such obligation. His object was not to write a complete and connected history. The Gospel is not a history, but a series of scenes, chosen with a view to a particular purpose of

which I shall have to speak later. For that purpose geography did not matter: it was quite indifferent whether the scene was laid in Judaea or in Galilee. But there was a sub-current in the author's mind which led him to supplement the work of his predecessors, and to notice some things which they had omitted. Perhaps this was one of the reasons that led him to single out by preference Judaean scenes. And perhaps those scenes really lent themselves better to the object that he had in view. The simple peasants of Galilee needed moral teaching; whereas the theologically minded inhabitants of Judaea called out more of a theology. If the writer of the Gospel had his home (or a home) at Jerusalem, it would be only natural that he would give prominence to scenes enacted there. But in any case it is to be observed that the Gospel by no means excludes a Galilean ministry, but rather presupposes it.

We are expressly told (in iv. 44) of the reason which caused Jesus to retire from Judaea to Galilee, and it is rather implied that the stay there would be of considerable duration. ('After the two days he went forth from thence into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.') Again, in vii. 4, the brethren of Jesus taunt Him with avoiding the head quarters of Judaism. Their words imply that His work had been done in the obscurity of a province ('No man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly'). He had not as yet manifested Himself to the world.

On the other hand, when we come to examine the

evidence of the Synoptics we find that it too is by no means so clear as it might seem at first sight. From the critical point of view what we have to deal with is not our Gospels as we have them, but the original documents out of which they are composed. Thus their evidence is really reduced to that of the main document, which is common to all three and is practically identical with our present Gospel of St. Mark. The second leading document, commonly known as the *Logia*, was a collection (in the main) of sayings with very few exact notes of place or time; and one or two allusions in this would perhaps be better satisfied by a Judaean ministry. In any case that would be true of the special source, or sources, of St. Luke. For instance, the story of Mary and Martha (Luke x. 38–42) points to Bethany; and parables like those of the Good Samaritan and the Pharisee and the Publican would have more local colour if delivered in or near Jerusalem.

Going back to the ground-document, we must remember that that too does not profess to be a biography: it is in the strictest sense a Gospel, the main object of which is to produce belief. If we may accept the well-attested tradition as to its origin—that it was put together from material supplied by the occasional preaching of St. Peter—completeness and consecutiveness are not what we should look for. There can be little doubt that this Gospel was really full of gaps, into which there is nothing to prevent us from inserting such southward excursions as we find

described in the Fourth Gospel. It is true that there is something rather strange in the fact that our Second Gospel should be so predominantly taken up with Galilee. Nothing that we know quite serves to explain this. But, however that may be, the unsolved problem has more to do with St. Mark than with St. John.

The antecedent probabilities of the case are really in favour of St. John's narrative and not against it. It is not likely that a pious Jew would neglect the command to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem. Neither is it likely that a religious reformer would be content to work and teach only in a province. 'It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem' (Luke xiii. 33) is a Synoptic saying; and it would be strange if the prophet only went to Jerusalem to die. It may be true that some of the traces of acquaintance with inhabitants of Judaea, such as the owners of the ass requisitioned for the public entry into Jerusalem and of the upper room in which the last Passover was eaten, might be accounted for by visits paid to the south before the active ministry of Jesus began. But this would not hold so well of cases like those of Judas Iscariot and Joseph of Arimathaea, whose relation to Jesus is associated with His religious work. Of course the proof is not decisive; but both these and many other indications would be better satisfied if the ministry had really been carried on in Judaea as well as Galilee. In that case we should better understand why the Pharisees sent emissaries to the north to watch what was going on (Mark iii. 22, vii. 1), and also how events gradually led up to the final crisis;

how the populace was worked up to the enthusiasm which greeted the public entry, and how the hostility of the rulers was deepened until it could be satisfied with nothing short of death. If the Synoptic narrative had stood alone, the catastrophe would be too sudden and abrupt.

### ii. *The Duration of the Ministry.*

The question as to the length of our Lord's ministry is allied to that as to its place. As to this, however, I should not be prepared to speak with quite so much confidence. Antecedently we have no sufficient means of saying whether a period of a little over one year or a little over two years would be more probable. Over such work a year is soon gone; and the relation of the different Synoptic documents to each other seems to show that all are but fragmentary and give an imperfect account of the events. The plucking of the ears of corn (or 'grain,' Amer. R. V.) has been taken to point to the occurrence of a Passover in the course of the Galilean ministry, because it would be at Passover time that the grain was beginning to ripen. We cannot press this very far; the incident may have occurred (if we have not to work in the Johannean narrative as well) near the beginning of the ministry.

On the other hand it is just possible that St. John's story may be compressed within the shorter limits. All turns on the reading of John vi. 4, where it is well known that there is strong patristic evidence for omitting 'the Passover,' so that this feast, like that in

ver. 1, would be unnamed. At the same time readings that rest entirely on patristic quotations are notoriously precarious, and I should hesitate as much to lay stress on this point as on the other. If I myself give the preference to the Johannean reckoning, it would be not because I thought that a clear case could be made out for it in itself, but only on the ground of the general superiority of the Fourth Gospel in chronological precision.

### iii. *The Cleansing of the Temple.*

Another well-known difference is that as to the place assigned to the cleansing of the Temple. In the Fourth Gospel this comes at the beginning of the ministry, and in the Synoptic Gospels at the end. Really the opposition is only between one document and another. The three Synoptics have in this instance a single base, which is practically our St. Mark. In matters of chronology the authority of this document does not rank very high; so that on external grounds it is possible enough that the Fourth Gospel should be preferred.

It is, however, often assumed that the internal grounds in this case outweigh the external. It is held that so strong a measure as the expulsion of the buyers and sellers could only fall in the later period, when the tension between the two sides was reaching its climax and the end was drawing near. I am not sure that this is not to exaggerate the significance of the action. It is really very much in the spirit of the Old Testament prophets. Compared (e. g.) to the

slaughter of Baal's prophets by Elijah, it may well seem a small thing. I agree that the act was in the strict sense Messianic rather than prophetic. This I think comes out in the saying, 'Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise' (John ii. 16). And yet, when we remember that the Lord had not long before come up from His baptism in the Jordan, and still had the Divine Voice proclaiming His sonship as it were sounding in His ear, it seems natural enough that He should mark the beginning of His ministry by some emphatic act. The conscience of the bystanders would be on His side, and one could well understand that they would be abashed and make no defence, like the accusers of the woman taken in adultery.

For these reasons it seems to me that the inferiority of St. John's version is not so self-evident as is supposed. If it were, how was it that the Evangelist came to change the accepted story as it reached him? At the same time I quite allow that memory may have played him false. The point is not really of any great importance, and I would not ask for more than that the question should be kept open.

iv. *The Date of the Last Supper and of the Crucifixion.*

Few subjects connected with the Fourth Gospel are more difficult and more complicated than this question of the date (i. e. the day of the month) of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. As the texts stand there is a real difference between the dates assigned to these events in the Synoptics and in the Fourth Gospel. There is agreement as to the day of the week. In

any case the Last Supper was eaten on the evening of Thursday, and our Lord suffered on the afternoon of Friday. But according to the Synoptics this Thursday would be Nisan 14, though on the Jewish reckoning (which counted the days from sunset to sunset) the Last Supper would fall on the beginning of Nisan 15. The Supper itself would be the regular passover, and the Crucifixion will have taken place after the passover. According to St. John we are expressly told that the Last Supper was held '*before* the passover' (xiii. 1), on what we should call the evening of Nisan 13, and the Jews the beginning of Nisan 14; and our Lord will have suffered on the afternoon of the following day, that still belonged to Nisan 14, and His death will have taken place at the time devoted to the slaughter of the Paschal lambs (3–5 p.m.).

It is said that this date is chosen for typological reasons, to identify Christ as the true Paschal Lamb. If that is so, the Evangelist has at least not said a word to emphasize the point, and to appreciate its significance we have to go to St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 7, 'For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ'). But the argument may just as well be inverted, and St. Paul may be taken as corroborating the statement in the Fourth Gospel. It is indeed, as I cannot but think in this as in other cases, more probable that the fact gave rise to the idea, than that the idea came first and was afterwards translated into fact.

There does not, therefore, seem to be any real presumption against the accuracy of the Fourth

Gospel. Probably, if the truth were known, the presumption so far as it went would be rather in its favour, from the early date and excellent character of the evidence supplied by St. Paul. But when we come to compare the two narratives in detail, the favourable presumption is increased by the fact that, whereas the Fourth Gospel is throughout entirely consistent with itself, the Synoptics are by no means so consistent.

An interesting point was raised by the late Dr. Chwolson, an eminent Russian *savant*, who was a great authority on things Jewish—he was a Jew by birth, though he embraced Christianity, and became Professor at St. Petersburg and a member of the Imperial Academy. In an elaborate monograph, *Das letzte Passamahl Christi und der Tag seines Todes* (St. Petersburg, 1892), Dr. Chwolson tried with great learning and ingenuity to bring the Synoptic narrative into harmony with that of St. John. The attempt was carefully examined by Dr. Schürer[1], and I am not prepared to say that it was successful. But I am not sure that one of the items in Dr. Chwolson's criticism of the Synoptic story was completely disposed of, even though so formidable a triad as Schürer himself, H. J. Holtzmann and Zahn agree in taking the other side. The three Synoptic Gospels all place the Last Supper on the evening of 'the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover' (Mark xiv. 12: cf. Matt. xxvi. 17, Luke xxii. 7). Chwolson challenges the accuracy of this expression and asserts

[1] *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 1893, col. 181 ff.

that 'From the Mosaic writings down to the Book of Jubilees (chap. xlix), Philo, Flavius Josephus, the Palestinian Targum ascribed to Jonathan ben Uziel, the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Rabbinical writings of the Middle Ages, indeed down to the present day, the Jews have always understood by the expression "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread," only the 15th of the month, never the 14th.' There is something of an answer to this criticism; and it is perhaps made good that by a laxity of expression the Synoptists might write as they have done. Of course the fundamental text is that of St. Mark, and Chwolson's ingenious solution by emending the text of St. Matthew is so much labour thrown away. Still the comprehensive statement as to Jewish usage does not seem to be invalidated, and the laxity of expression remains somewhat curious.

I can conceive it possible that the Synoptists may be brought into closer agreement with St. John—perhaps on the lines of a paper by the Rev. G. H. Box (*Journ. of Theol. Studies*, April, 1902), which I am glad to see is spoken of with some approval by Dr. Drummond—on the hypothesis that the meal of which our Lord and His disciples partook was really the ceremony of *Kiddûsh*, a solemn 'sanctification' which preceded the weekly Sabbath and great festivals like the Passover.

But in any case the Synoptic version is too much burdened by contradictions to be taken as it stands. Many of these have been often pointed out In Mark xiv. 2 (Matt. xxvi. 5) we are expressly told that the

Sanhedrin determined to arrest Jesus, but 'not during the feast,' lest there should be a tumult among the people. But, according to the Synoptic account, it was on the most sacred day of the feast, and after the Passover had been eaten, that the arrest was carried out. Further, we observe that although the Last Supper is described as a Passover, there is no hint or allusion to its most characteristic feature, the paschal lamb. The events of the night would involve sacrilege for a devout Jew. On such a holy day it was not allowed to bear arms; and yet Peter is armed, and the servants of the High Priest, if not themselves armed, accompany an armed party. Then we have the hurried meeting of the Sanhedrin who, according to the Synoptic version, would have just risen from the paschal meal. Jesus is taken to the *praetorium* of the Roman Governor, to enter which would cause defilement, and that on the most sacred day of the feast. Simon of Cyrene is represented as coming in from the country, which though perhaps not necessarily implying a working day, looks more like it than a day treated as a sabbath. The haste with which the bodies were taken down from the cross is accounted for by the sanctity of a day that is about to begin, not of one that is just ending (Mark xv. 42). If it had been the latter, Joseph of Arimathaea could not have 'bought' the linen cloth in which the body was laid.

We may add to the above a point specially brought out by Mr. Box. 'In all the accounts it is noticeable that *one* cup only is mentioned which was partaken

of by *all*; whereas at the Passover a special point is made of each man bringing his own cup to drink from.'

It seems on the whole to be safe to say that if the two accounts are to be harmonized, it is not St. John who will need to be corrected from the Synoptists, but the Synoptists who will have to be corrected by St. John. And the result of the investigation on which we have been engaged will be that, of the four points commonly alleged against the Gospel, two are more or less clearly in its favour, and the remaining two are not more than open questions on which either side may be right. Even if the investigation had been more adverse than it is, it would by no means have followed that the Fourth Gospel was not the work of an eye-witness: but its position appears to be strengthened rather than the reverse.

## II. *The alleged Want of Development in St. John's Narrative.*

More serious than any criticism in detail is the general objection that the narrative of the Fourth Gospel does not, like the ground-document of the Synoptics, supply a reasonable and natural evolution of events. It is said—and not without cause—that in the Fourth Gospel we see the end from the very beginning. Whereas in the Synoptics, and more particularly in St. Mark, Jesus does not at first put Himself forward as the Messiah, and is not recognized as such even by His disciples before the Confession of St. Peter, or by the public before the triumphal

entry into Jerusalem; in the very first chapter of St. John He is twice over greeted as the Messiah (vers. 41, 45) and twice described as the Son of God (vers. 34, 49), and the Baptist also at this early stage already points to Him as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (ver. 29, cf. 36). Nor is it enough that His disciples are said to have believed on Him from the first (ii. 11), but we are also told that in Jerusalem at the Passover 'many believed on his name' (ii. 23). In chap. iii advanced teaching is given to Nicodemus, and John the Baptist is represented as using very exalted language about Him (iii. 31–6). In chap. iv Jesus reveals Himself as the Messiah to the Samaritan woman (ver. 26); and we are not only told that many of the Samaritans believed on Him, but that they actually acknowledged Him as 'the Saviour of the world' (vers. 39–42). In chap. v He is accused of 'making himself equal with God' (ver. 18). In chap. vi the people are so carried away by enthusiasm that they want to force Him to place Himself at their head (ver. 15); and once more very advanced teaching is imparted. (vers. 26–58).

These earlier chapters are the more important because in the latter part of the ministry the advanced teaching that we find may seem more in place. The difficulty that we have to deal with is threefold: it relates partly to the anticipated confessions, partly to the free use of the word 'believed,' and partly to the advanced character of the teaching. This last point may be dealt with more appropriately when

we come to speak of the teaching generally; but the other two call for consideration at once.

Before passing on to this, I should like to say frankly that I am not going to deny or to minimize the facts. I do not honestly believe that everything happened exactly as it is, or seems to be, reported. But in saying this I must add that I also do not believe that, even if the argument were made good to the full extent that is alleged, it would at all decisively impugn the conclusion at which we have hitherto seemed to arrive—that the Gospel is really the work of an eye-witness and of St. John.

In looking back over a distant past it is always difficult to keep the true perspective; the mind is apt to forget, or at least to foreshorten, the process by which its beliefs have been reached; and when once a settled conviction has been formed it is treated as though it had been present from the beginning. It would have been strange indeed if the aged disciple had nowhere allowed the cherished beliefs of more than half a lifetime to colour the telling of his story, or to project themselves backwards into those early days when his faith was not as yet ripe but only ripening. It would not in the least disturb our conclusion to admit, that in the earlier chapters of the Gospel there are a number of expressions that are heightened in character and more definite in form than those that were really used.

### i. *Anticipated Confessions.*

What has just been said will apply especially to

the terms in which the first disciples who gathered round our Lord are described as giving in their adhesion. The author of the Gospel was himself a convinced Christian—a Christian so convinced that he could hardly recall the time when he had been anything else. It was natural to him to think of his comrades in the faith as he thought of himself. And if he puts into their mouths stronger expressions than they actually used, it was only a little antedating the fact.

But, apart from this, it is a question whether we ourselves do not read into the words more than they really contain. There can be no doubt that the half-century, or rather more, before the fall of Jerusalem was a time of high-strung expectation on the part of the Jews. The belief that the Messiah was about to appear was widely diffused among all classes of the people. It was this belief which gave a transient success to the many pretenders of whom we read in the Acts and in the pages of Josephus. There was the feeling that the Messiah might come at any moment, and no Jew would have been surprised if He had appeared in his own immediate neighbourhood. Vague rumours were everywhere about, and we may be sure would readily attach themselves to individuals. It is probable enough that among the crowds which gathered round the Baptist this expectation was even more rife than elsewhere. Those who came to his baptism, we may well believe, were among the most earnest, the most patriotic, and the most sanguine spirits of the nation. That little groups, united by local ties, would be readily formed,

and readily seek to attach themselves to one who seemed to possess the qualities of a leader, would be only what we should expect. And if their enthusiasm was easily aroused, that would be all in harmony with their surroundings.

Perhaps the most remarkable of all the anticipations in these early chapters is the announcement attributed to the Baptist, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!' There is no doubt that the Baptist had a prophetic gift. In all our authorities he is represented as predicting the coming greatness of his successor. But it was one thing to feel a dim presentiment of a mission higher than his own, and another thing to predict for that mission at the very outset a form which it did indeed actually take, but which it seems impossible that anything should have suggested at the moment. It would be difficult to find a better example of what we may call the 'interpretative function' of the Evangelist. It is evident that the events of these first days made the deepest impression upon him, an impression that no lapse of time could obliterate. Certainly something occurred which in later years gave its shape to this remarkable saying. In the next chapter we have a similar saying, the history of which is fully related: 'When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.' In this case the whole process was consciously realized; the Evangelist distinguished in his own mind between the word

as originally spoken and the sense which he was led to put upon it. May we not suppose that in regard to the earlier saying a similar process went on, but with just the difference that it was in great part unconscious, and not conscious? The Baptist is represented as repeating his exclamation twice; but on the second occasion the qualifying clause is dropped; the words are only, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!' Is it not possible that this, or something like it, is all that was actually spoken? Perhaps not so much even as this; but in some way or other we may believe that the Baptist did, as a matter of fact, compare the Figure approaching him to a lamb. This comparison sank deep into the mind of one at least of his hearers; and imperceptibly the words filled out with all the full religious significance of the lamb—the paschal lamb, the lamb dumb before his shearers, the suffering Servant, whose sufferings were also an atonement, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

This is a process which psychologically we can follow. But here, as in so many other places, we can follow it far more easily, if we take as our starting-point some actual phrase which the Evangelist had heard and which had lodged in his mind, than if we are compelled to regard it as pure invention. We may well ask what conceivable train of thought could put it into the head of a second-century writer to introduce so strange and remote a thought at a point in his narrative with which it seems to have no natural connexion.

### ii. *The Use of the Word 'Believe.'*

I have long suspected that one of the reasons for the apparent want of progressive development in the Fourth Gospel has been the ambiguity of its use of the word 'believe.' We are told from the first that disciples and others 'believed,' and it is natural enough that we should take the word in the full sense of complete conversion and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. But there can be little doubt that to do so is to read into the word a great deal more than the writer intended. We do not make sufficient allowance for the extreme simplicity of his vocabulary. He has but one word to denote all the different stages of belief. We must attend closely to the context if we would see when he means the first dawning of belief and when he means full conviction. Many times over he uses the word of what must have been a quite transient impression. The impression might be confirmed and become rooted, or it might pass rapidly away. As applied to members of the Twelve the word denotes successive stages of acceptance, culminating—but even then only provisionally—in St. Peter's confession. As applied to the Samaritans and to the mixed crowds in Galilee and Jerusalem, the word probably does not cover more than faint stirrings of curiosity and emotion which lightly came and lightly passed away. One example of the use of the word is especially interesting. The writer is speaking of the visit of Peter and the unnamed

disciple to the tomb, and he tells how, after Peter had entered, the other disciple also entered, 'and he saw, and believed' (xx. 8); but he immediately adds: 'For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.' We might perhaps paraphrase: 'The wonder of the resurrection began to dawn upon them, though they were not prepared for it. At a later date they came to understand that prophecy had distinctly pointed to it, and that the whole mission of the Messiah would have been incomplete without it: but as yet this was hidden from them. They saw that something mysterious had happened, and they felt that what had happened was profoundly important; as yet they could not say more. The first step towards a full belief had been taken, though the full belief itself was still in the future.'

### iii. *Traces of Development in the Fourth Gospel.*

So far I have not questioned the indictment that the Gospel is wanting in historical development. All that I have done has been to urge some mitigating or qualifying considerations. But I believe that the extent within which it can be said that there is no development, and that the end appears from the beginning, is often much exaggerated. The unfavourable instances are observed and the favourable are neglected. If, instead of fixing our attention upon what is said of the disciples in the first few chapters, we were to look at the attitude of those who are not disciples from chap. vii onwards, we should find a state of things

differing somewhat from our expectations, and one that really bears out the Synoptic version of the great reserve and reticence with which the claims of Christ were prosecuted.

Use has already been made of the opening paragraph of chap. vii to show that in the conception of the Fourth Evangelist as well as in that of his predecessors the ministry of Christ had been in the main carried on in a province and not in Judaea or Jerusalem. The evidence of the same passage, and indeed of the whole chapter, is not less clear that He did not go about definitely proclaiming Himself as the Messiah, but that He left His claim to be inferred, and doubtfully inferred, from the indirect implications of His teaching. The brethren of Jesus insinuate that He shrank from putting His claims really to the test. It was a paradox to suppose that He could work in secret, and yet expect public recognition. If He desired this He should go about the right way to obtain it; He should come forward to the front of the stage, where He could be seen and known (vii. 3, 4). On the other hand, the answer which the brethren received implies that the time for this complete manifestation was not yet come; it was to come before His work was finished, but the hour had not yet struck.

Again, when Jesus does at last go up to the feast, the crowds begin to speculate about Him; but their speculations are as yet quite vague. Was He really a good man or a deceiver? (ver. 12). Had He really a mission from God? (vers. 15–18). Only by degrees

do some throw out the tentative question, 'Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?' They throw out the question, but they seem inclined for themselves to answer it in the negative (vers. 26, 27). Others think that even the Christ, when He came, would not do greater wonders (ver. 31). As these discussions went on, some were emboldened to go further, and expressed the belief that Jesus was really that great Prophet whom they were expecting. Yet others—but still tentatively—returned to the idea that He may be the Christ. But no sooner do they suggest this than they are met by the reply that the Christ must be born at Bethlehem, and cannot come out of Galilee. Thus there is a division of opinion, and no advance is made (vers. 40–3). This tentative and interrogative attitude is not confined to the crowds. Even in the Sanhedrin itself, though the great majority scornfully reject Him, there is at least one (Nicodemus) who pleads that the accused should be heard before He is condemned. He too is met by the same test; 'out of Galilee ariseth no prophet' (vers. 45–52).

It is very clear that no sharply defined issue was set before the people. They are left to draw their own conclusions; and they draw them as well as they can by the help of such criteria as they have. But there is no *Entweder-oder*—either Messiah or not Messiah—peremptorily propounded by Jesus Himself.

Nor does this state of things last only to the Feast of Tabernacles. It still continues at the end of the December before the Passion. At the Feast of the Encaenia, as Jesus is walking in Solomon's Porch,

the Jews are represented as coming round Him and saying to Him, 'how long dost thou hold us in suspense (*τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἴρεις*)? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly' (x. 24). It is evident that up to this point, so near the end, the claim of Jesus to be the Christ had never been so plainly made as to be a matter of notoriety. It is true that Jesus replied, 'I told you, and ye believed not.' The reference no doubt is to the rather enigmatical sayings found in this Gospel. But even from these it would seem that the inference was not direct and inevitable; and our Lord is represented as going on to appeal not to His words, but to His works (ver. 25). As to the nature of the sayings, there will be more to be said later. But the broad conclusion seems to be that the writer of this Gospel is as clearly conscious as any of the Synoptists of the real course of events, and that he too was well aware that the Messiah, when He came, had not forced a peremptory claim upon an unwilling people. It may thus be seen that the anticipated confessions of the early chapters, whatever we may otherwise think of them, are really subordinate and (so to speak) accidental; the main course of the ministry is not conceived differently in the Fourth Gospel and in the Synoptics.

## III. *The Nature of the Discourses.*

Another of the objections brought against the Fourth Gospel that is not without a certain amount of foundation is that from the nature of the Discourses.

It is said with some degree of truth that the discourses put into the mouth of our Lord in this Gospel are different from those in the Synoptics. We notice at once that the parables, which contribute so much to our conception of the outward form and manner of our Lord's teaching, have dropped out. What St. John calls by that name, although similar, is not exactly the same thing. Many of the discourses are longer; for instance, that which is apparently addressed to Nicodemus in chap. iii, the discourse after the healing of the impotent man in chap. v, the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum in chap. vi, and the last discourses in chaps. xiv–xvii. And we observe further that the style of many parts of these discourses, while it is not like that which we find in the Synoptic Gospels, corresponds remarkably with the style of St. John's Epistles.

It is not the case that the speeches in the Fourth Gospel are systematically longer than those in the Synoptics. We perhaps have an impression that they are; but, if so, it is not borne out by the facts. For the proof of this I may refer to the statistics carefully worked out by Dr. Drummond on p. 24. There is no doubt that the speeches of our Lord were, as Justin said, 'short and concise.' They had nothing in common with the elaborate compositions and rounded periods of Greek rhetoric. The type on which they were modelled was wholly different. We find the nearest parallel to it in the so-called 'Sayings of the Jewish Fathers' (*Pirke Aboth*). Each saying is a sort of aphorism; and a longer discourse is only a string of

aphorisms, unless it takes the form of a simple narrative or description, like the parables in the Synoptic Gospels or allegories, like those of the Good Shepherd and the Vine and its Branches, in the Fourth Gospel.

One form of discourse, that we may be sure must have been common, is more fully represented in the Fourth Gospel than in the other three; I mean the dialogue, and in particular the controversial dialogue, growing out of some natural occasion, such as those of which I spoke in the last lecture, the woman of Samaria's appeal to the patriarch Jacob, the Jews' demand for a sign like a gift of manna, the practice of circumcising on the sabbath day, the charge of demoniacal possession and the claim of the Jews to be Abraham's children. Instances like these must be set down to the credit of the Gospel and not against it.

The longer discourses appear to grow out of the aphoristic sayings of which I have spoken. Of these again Dr. Drummond has made an ample collection (pp. 18–20). But it is true that the Evangelist permits himself to dwell on such sayings, to repeat and enforce them by expansions of his own, which keep coming back to the same point. It has often been remarked that we are constantly left in doubt where the words of our Lord end and those of the Evangelist begin. Probably the Evangelist himself did not discriminate, or even try to discriminate. A modern writer, in similar circumstances, would feel obliged to ask himself whether the words which he was setting down

were really spoken or not; but there is no reason to suppose that the author of the Gospel would be conscious of any such obligation. He would not pause to put to himself questions, or to exercise conscious self-criticism. He would just go on writing as the spirit moved him. And the consequence is that historical recollections and interpretative reflection, the fruit of thought and experience, have come down to us inextricably blended.

St. Paul was not a historian, or we may be sure that he would have furnished abundant parallels for the sort of procedure that we find in St. John. He is not a historian, but he does for once lapse into history, and he does then furnish a parallel which has always seemed to me very exact and very illuminating. You will remember in Gal. ii. 11 ff. the account of the dispute with St. Peter at Antioch. The first few verses are strictly historical; but suddenly and without a word of warning the Apostle glides into one of his own abstruse doctrinal arguments as to justification by works of law and by faith.

While therefore I quite allow that in any given instance there is need for close scrutiny to determine what belongs to the Master and what to the disciple, I entirely repudiate the inference that St. John cannot have written the Gospel.

Psychologically, the Gospel is more intelligible if one like St. John wrote it, one who drew upon his own memories and was conscious of speaking with authority. It is a mechanical and, I believe, really untenable view to suppose that the author has simply

taken over certain Synoptic sayings and adapted them to his own ideas. We form for ourselves a far truer and more adequate conception if we think of these discourses as the product of a single living experience. They are from first to last a part of the author's self. The recollections on which they are based are his own, and it is his own mind that has insensibly played upon them, and shaped them, and worked up in them the fruits of his own experience.

It is this that really constitutes the value of the Gospel. It is not a mere invention, but it is the result of a strong first-hand impression of a wonderful Personality. It is a blending of fact and interpretation; but the interpretation comes from one who had an unique position and unique advantages for getting at the heart and truth of that which he sought to interpret. It is the mind of Christ, seen through the medium of one of the first and closest of His companions.

## IV. *The Presentation of the Supernatural.*

### i. *The treatment of Miracle in the Fourth Gospel.*

I cannot regard anything that we have hitherto had to deal with as constituting a substantial set-off against the arguments previously urged for the authentic and autoptic character of the Gospel. It is otherwise when we come to its manner of presenting the Supernatural. It must be confessed that the miracles in the Fourth Gospel, while in the main they run parallel to those in the Synoptic Gospels, yet do appear to involve a

certain heightening of the effect. The courtier's servant is healed from a distance; the impotent man had been thirty-and-eight years in his infirmity; the blind man who was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam had been blind from his birth; Lazarus had lain four days in the tomb.

Not only do these details imply an enhancement of the supernatural, but it seems that the author of the Gospel valued them specially for that reason. They fall in entirely with his purpose in writing. He sees in them so many striking illustrations of the glory of the Christ. He had been himself keenly on the watch for the manifestations of that glory, and he delighted to record them in the hope that they might impress his readers as they had impressed him.

We must not make too much of the details I have just mentioned. There is no real difference of principle. The healing of the centurion's servant is telepathic like that of the courtier's son. The woman with the issue of blood had been ill for twelve years, and had spent all her living on physicians. From the way in which blind Bartimaeus describes his sensations we should infer that he too had never had his sight. Death is death; and Jairus's daughter and the widow's son at Nain were as dead as Lazarus. Really, on this point, there is little to choose between the Gospels, as there is little to choose between the documents out of which the Synoptics are composed.

A common form of objection is that which lays stress on the isolation of the narrative of the raising of Lazarus. So notable a miracle, it is urged, would have

been sure to leave traces of itself in the other Gospels. And I quite allow that the argument from silence has more force here than in many of the other cases in which it is used. And yet even here it is easily, and I feel sure it is often, much exaggerated. The only document of which the author seems to have had the intention of making any sort of collection of miracles was the ground-document of the Synoptics—we may say, our present St. Mark. Neither the *Logia* nor the special source or sources of St. Luke do more than mention incidentally a very few. But when we think of the way in which St. Mark is said to have composed his Gospel, it is evident that his collection of miracles could not be in the least exhaustive. He was dependent in the main upon the preaching of St. Peter, the object of which was not historical or biographical, but the edification of its hearers. If it is true (and it is as yet hardly proved) that St. Mark had access also to the *Logia*, that was a collection of sayings rather than of acts. So that there is no one source that we should expect to have anything like a complete enumeration of miracles.

On the other hand, if we turn to what I have called the special source or sources of St. Luke, how vividly do they bring home to us the incompleteness of the whole previous record! St. Mark apparently tried to collect parables as well as miracles; so also did the *Logia*. And yet neither of these documents has any trace of the Prodigal Son, or the Good Samaritan, or the Pharisee and the Publican, or the Rich Man and Lazarus, or the Rich Man cut off before he could enjoy

his wealth, or the Importunate Widow, or the Unrighteous Steward. We should have thought it incredible beforehand that any one who professed to make collections with a view to a Life of Christ at all could have omitted, I will not say all, but any two or three of gems like these. And yet we have two considerable works, both including a collection of parables, and yet in neither of them is there a vestige of any one of the group I have mentioned. Even the conspicuous example of the Raising of Lazarus does not shake me in my distrust of the argument from silence.

ii. *Method of approaching the Question of Miracle.*

And yet I can well understand the reluctance to accept narratives of miracle. I can well understand a nineteenth or twentieth-century reader taking up the Fourth Gospel and saying at once and off-hand, The writer of this cannot have been an eye-witness of the events he describes. I have little doubt that it is the same sort of off-hand impression which is really at work in the minds of many of the critics. They acquire the impression in the course of a rapid perusal; or rather it attaches itself to the recollection that they bring with them of what they learnt in their childhood. They do not try to shake it off; it is always there at the back of their minds; and it colours, and I must needs think discolours, all the elaborate and learned study that they make of the Gospels in maturer years.

This question of miracles has been occupying my

mind for some time; and I think that at once the most candid and the best procedure that I can follow in regard to it will be just to lay before you the provisional conclusions that I have reached as provisional, as a stage in the investigation of a subject that does not at all profess to be final, but that I hope contains something of truth and something that may be helpful to others as it has been to myself.

The one main principle in the treatment of miracle that I should like to urge would be the importance of keeping as distinct as we can two things, the attitude of mind in regard to miracles of the contemporaries—those before whom they are said to have happened and on whose testimony they have come down to us—and our own attitude now in the twentieth century. It seems to me that our difficulties are much increased, and that we are prevented from realizing the full strength of the case for miracles, by confusing these two things.

If we take first the attitude of the contemporaries, it seems to me that several fixed points come out in regard to them on which we may really take our stand with great confidence.

(i) The first point is that what these men fully believed to be miracles undoubtedly happened. We have evidence on this head that is strictly first-hand, the evidence of those who believed that they had wrought miracles themselves, as well as that they had witnessed the working of miracles by others.

(ii) The second point is that this evidence is absolutely bona fide. Our best example is, I suppose,

St. Paul. It is a good exercise to collect the allusions to miracles in the Epistles of St. Paul, to 'signs and wonders,' to δυνάμεις or 'acts of power,' to special gifts of the Spirit. There can be no doubt that St. Paul was possessed with the conviction that he was living in the midst of miracle. This conviction lies behind and permeates all his thought in the same natural, spontaneous, inevitable way in which he performed, or saw others perform, the most ordinary functions of nature, eating or drinking or sleeping or breathing.

(iii) We observe further that these extraordinary phenomena of which he was conscious had for him the value of miracle. The ancients conceived of miracle as a mark of the presence and co-operation of Deity. The man who could work miracles showed thereby that God was actively with him. Hence the working of miracles served to authenticate teaching; it was the proof of commission from God. It was in this sense that St. Paul appealed to his own miracles as the 'signs of an apostle' (2 Cor. xii. 12), and in this sense that he claimed that his preaching carried with it 'the demonstration of the Spirit and of power' (1 Cor. ii. 4; cf. Rom. xv. 19).

(iv) If we enlarge our view and look away from the performance of miracle by individuals to the great part which the belief in miracle has played in the history of mankind, and more particularly in the history of the Christian Church, we cannot, I think, fail to see that it must have had a providential function. I do not hesitate to introduce teleology. The history of the evolution of the world and of man is such that we are

compelled to think of it as designed; in other words we are compelled to think that the Power which lies behind phenomena has had a purpose, which is at least analogous to purpose in man. There may be some paradoxical features in the carrying out of this purpose, due to the peculiar conditions under which it has operated; but these cannot obscure the broad lines of purposeful development; and over a considerable tract of that development the belief in miracle has played a substantial part, and a part that we can see to be deeply interwoven with some of the culminating events in the history of the human race.

Some of us might be content to stop at this point; we might be content to accept a belief that has been so ingrained in the mind of man and so important in its effects and associations simply as it stands. But the curiosity of science is not easily satisfied, and in the present day especially it goes on to press the further question, After all, what was it that really happened? We can see clearly enough what St. Paul (e. g.) believed to have happened, but how far did this belief of his correspond to the fact? Were these miracles that he assumes real miracles?

When we ask these questions, it is well to remember that we are still in the region of relative ideas; we do not mean so much What is the absolute reality of what happened? as How should we describe it—we, with our twentieth-century habits of thought and improved scientific categories?

It is here that we get on to the really difficult ground. It is ground that by the nature of the case must be

difficult, because it means that we have to put a twentieth-century construction upon first-century records. It is as if a present-day physician were dependent for his diagnosis of the facts upon Galen or Hippocrates; or rather, the real state of the case is worse still, for that would be at least comparing science with science, the science of one century with the science of another, whereas the data that we have to go upon are not scientific (in the sense of proceeding from experts), but rather represent popular ideas and popular assumptions.

i. In spite of these difficulties there are still, I cannot but think, some general considerations that may help us. The first is that the cause must be in some degree commensurate with the effects. Christianity is in any case a very stupendous fact; and it will not do to explain it as arising out of a series of trivial misunderstandings.

ii. The evidence of the Gospels is not quite equal in quality to that of the Epistles. It is the evidence of men reporting what they or others had seen, not (so far as appears) that of men who had felt the current of miraculous energy actually thrill through themselves. St. Paul had felt this; it was part of the experience on which he looked back, and which he felt to be intimately bound up with the whole success of his mission.

And yet we have to remember that the miracles of St. Paul and his companions and contemporaries are secondary, whereas those of the Gospels are primary. They are like the waves caused by an earthquake, but they are not themselves the earthquake. If Christ had not come first and done the things that never man

did, there would have been no Day of Pentecost, no outpouring of the Spirit, no overmastering impulse that carried men like St. Paul from one end of the Mediterranean to the other 'in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xv. 19).

iii. The argument is therefore *a fortiori*. The disciple is not above his master, or the servant above his lord. All these subordinate manifestations, though we have in some ways better evidence for them, do but point back to the one supreme manifestation, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must never forget that behind the alleged miracles of the Gospels we have the absolutely greatest spiritual force that the world has ever known. If our knowledge is as yet very imperfect of the influence of spirit upon matter in general, it is inevitably still more imperfect of this crowning instance of the spirit-world in contact with the material. When we argue upwards from the analogy of the known to the unknown, we must always leave a large margin for the interval between the point at which our common experience, and even higher extraordinary experience, ends, and the point at which this highest of all human experiences begins. Even a strictly scientific method should be conscious of its own limitations; when it has done all that it can do, it should be aware that its ladders are still too short to scale the height that has to be scaled; it must leave room for a venture of faith beyond the furthest horizon of sight.

iv. We are not called upon to believe that anything is really contrary to, or in violation of, nature

St. Augustine laid down, some fifteen centuries ago: 'Portentum ergo fit non contra naturam sed contra quam est nota natura' (*De Civitate Dei*, xxi. 8). We can always exercise an act of faith, that if we really knew what had taken place, and if we really knew the highest laws of the universe, there would not be any contradiction between them. As it is, there is a double margin of error: it is difficult, and in many cases impossible, for us so to translate the language of the distant past into the idiom of the present as to be sure that we can realize what are the facts that we have to deal with; and, even if we had got the facts, we should still have but a very imperfect knowledge of the causes by which they were determined.

v. We speak, therefore, not of what we know, but, as I have said, by an act of faith, of that which would be *if* we knew. In this attitude we make allowance for possible and probable defects in our sources: we make allowance for all the disturbing influences that have brought them into the shape in which we see them. But in doing this, we have the consolation of feeling that any element of mistake that has come in under this head has been all of the nature of *extension*. The miracles of primitive Christianity are certainly not a series of fictions. There certainly was among them a large nucleus of events that really had the character claimed for them, that were really due to the operation of a Divine cause, and really bore witness to the presence of such a cause. If there was anything beyond this of a less trustworthy character, we may be sure that it was framed on the analogy of that

which is verifiable, or that would be verifiable if we possessed instruments and methods capable of dealing with it.

This principle of *extensions* is, I believe, of the first importance in the scientific reconstruction of primitive Christianity. It at once explains and covers the transition from that which is permanent to that which is not permanent. It signifies 'the removing of those things that are shaken, . . that those things which are not shaken may remain.' As, for instance, in the case of the belief in Inspiration, there is undoubtedly a reality underlying the popular belief both of ancient and of modern times, so, also, in the case of miracle we may be sure that there is an inner reality, which no criticism will ever dissolve, though it may succeed in making us conscious that the descriptions of eighteen centuries ago no longer satisfy the thought of to-day.

### iii. *The Gospel embodies ocular Testimony.*

For these reasons I do not wish it to be supposed that I regard all difficulties as removed and every question as closed, if I insist upon the conclusion that has so far seemed to be emerging from our study—the conclusion that the Gospel is the work of an eye-witness of the events, who is describing for us what he had himself actually seen. I do not want to use any kind of argumentative coercion. I fully believe that the author of the Gospel occupied this position; and yet I do not mean, by asserting this, to impose upon others the necessary consequence that everything happened (i. e. that we can realize it to ourselves as having happened)

exactly as it is described. For my own part I abstain from attempting to re-write the narrative. I know that any such attempt is foredoomed to failure. Still more do I refuse to follow those who peremptorily dismiss all that they cannot understand. I cherish and value very highly the assurance that we have to do with the work of an eye-witness. And yet, as I have said, I accept the result with a certain reserve, with the consciousness that there is something unexplained and which I perhaps myself shall never be able to explain.

This does not prevent me from making what I can of the easier incidents, in which one seems to see one's way more clearly. I will give an example. One of the great passages discussed at the outset of our inquiries is typical and significant in the light which it throws on the mental attitude of the writer. We are told how, as he stood at the foot of the Cross, he saw the side pierced, and blood and water flow from the wound. It is in connexion with this that we have one of those solemn asseverations (whether made by the writer for himself or by some one else for him) of the truth, resting upon his own ocular testimony, of the fact that he is recording. The whole incident evidently made a deep impression upon him, for he goes on to quote it as a direct fulfilment of two distinct passages of Scripture. And again, in his First Epistle, he refers to the peculiar phenomenon which he had seen as one that was fraught with mystical meaning.

Now physicians tell us that what the Evangelist actually saw was not, strictly and literally, what he has described. The efflux from the side was not exactly

blood and water, though it might quite well have had an appearance like that of blood and water, and the Evangelist no doubt supposed it to be what he says. The blood was real blood, but that which looked like water was a sort of lymph or serum. This would serve equally well to suggest the train of thought which the Evangelist attached to it. It is easy to understand how what was for him a strange phenomenon at first struck the eye and then dwelt in his mind, and as he often returned to it and pondered over it, at last took definite shape, as a visible emblem, divinely produced, of a principle deeply rooted in the Christian religion, the principle that found expression in its two leading Sacraments.

Clearly here it is permissible to distinguish between the fact itself for which we have this explicit testimony, and the train of speculation to which it gave rise. The speculations are such as in all ages have naturally commended themselves to devout minds. There have always been those who have had so strong a sense of the unity of things, of the 'pre-established harmony' between the material and the spiritual, that the 'outward shows' of external nature 'the earth and every common sight,' have seemed to reflect and symbolize that which is unseen. We may well believe that there is broad fundamental truth underlying these dim intuitions, though it may be another thing to say that in any particular case the harmony that is guessed is precisely that which the Divine Artificer intended. But the point on which I should wish to lay stress is, that the order of thought is from the observed fact to

the idea, and not backwards from the idea to a fact imagined to correspond with it. And in regard to the Fourth Gospel, I think we may lay down that the Evangelist always starts from something that he has seen. It is possible that his mind, acting retrospectively on his memory of the physical impression, may emphasize features in the impression that were not so distinct at the time when it was given. But the notion that the Gospel is a pure romance woven entirely out of the creations of the brain seems to me contrary to its whole character.

I do not wish at all to imply—I desire expressly to guard myself against implying—that other miracles in the Fourth Gospel can be explained so simply as that of the pierced side. On the wider question I have just said what I have to say. But for my present purpose, in its bearing upon the criticism of the Fourth Gospel, I content myself with maintaining, that St. John's descriptions of the supernatural always start from facts that had come under his own personal observation, or that of others who were very near to him.

### iv. *A Patristic Parallel.*

So far as the treatment of the supernatural has been made a ground of objection to the Gospel, I think we may take a warning from critical experience in another field. I quoted in the second Lecture several instances in which criticism has distinctly changed its mind and come back to a view far more in accordance with tradition than that which at one time prevailed. One of these instances was

taken from the literature of the beginnings of Monasticism, and more particularly from the *Vita Antonii* ascribed to St. Athanasius. I pointed out how the whole class of literature to which this treatise belongs has been definitely set upon its feet again. After being at one time very radically treated, it is now widely accepted as in great part resting upon good first-hand authority. One of the arguments alleged against the Athanasian treatise turned upon the miracles contained in it. But at the present time that argument would be differently stated. Whereas it used to run, This treatise contains miracles of a kind that must be unhistorical, and therefore it cannot be the genuine work of St. Athanasius; now it would run, This treatise is certainly a genuine work of St. Athanasius, and therefore we must make of the miracles what we can: a judicious estimate of them is given by Dom Cuthbert Butler in his *Lausiac History of Palladius* (1898), pp. 192–6. In like manner I should like to reverse the objection that is often brought against the Fourth Gospel and to say, that there is strong reason for regarding it as a first-hand authority, and that the recognition of this should be a postulate of any examination of its bearing upon the question of the supernatural.

I observe that at the Church Congress recently held at Liverpool, in the discussion on New Testament Criticism, Mr. F. C. Burkitt made use of an argument very similar to this, and that exception was taken to it at the end of the debate by the Bishop of Salisbury, on the ground that the miracles in the Gospels and in

the *Historia Lausiaca* are too different to be compared. Of course I perfectly acknowledge the difference. I would not for a moment wish to press the argument for more than it is worth. At the same time, it seems to me that we must not despise the day of small things; we must not reject an analogy simply because it is incomplete. It rarely happens that an analogy entirely covers that with which it is compared. Many an argument is employed *a minori ad maius*; and I do not doubt that it was in that sense that Mr. Burkitt wished his words to be taken, as I should wish mine.

# LECTURE VI

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE GOSPEL

THE Fourth Gospel is like one of those great Egyptian temples which we may see to this day at Dendera or Edfu or Karnak—and we remember that the Temple on Mount Zion itself was of the same general type—the sanctuary proper is approached through a pylon, a massive structure overtopping it in height and outflanking it on both sides. The pylon of the Fourth Gospel is of course the Prologue; and this raises at the outset two important questions: I. What are the affinities of its leading thought; or, in other words, what is its place in the history of thought and the history of religion? and II. In what relation does the prologue stand to the rest of the Gospel? I need not say that both these points have been, and are being still, actively debated.

### I. *Affinities of the Logos doctrine.*

The preponderance of opinion at the present time doubtless leans to the view that there is some connexion between the Logos of Philo and the doctrine of the Logos in the Fourth Gospel. But the question is as to the nature and closeness of that connexion. On this many shades of opinion are possible.

### 1. *Partial parallels in O. T. and Judaism.*

If the Logos of St. John is not connected with that of Philo, the alternative must be that its origin is Palestinian. The directions in which we should look would be to the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the *Memra* of the Targums. And it is true that there are many places in these writings in which 'the Word of God' is used with pregnant meaning.

Ps. xxxiii. 6: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.' Cf. 2 Esdras vi. 43: 'As soon as thy word went forth the work was done.'

Ps. cvii. 20: 'He sendeth his word, and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions.'

Ps. cxlvii. 15: 'He sendeth out his commandment upon earth; his word runneth very swiftly.'

Ps. cxlvii. 18: 'He sendeth out his word, and melteth them; he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.'

Isa. xl. 8: 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.'

Isa. lv. 10, 11: 'For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'

Wisd. ix. 1: 'O God of the fathers, and Lord who keepest thy mercy, who madest all things by thy word.'

Wisd. xvi. 12: 'For of a truth it was neither herb nor mollifying plaister that cured them, but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things.'

Wisd. xviii. 15, 16: 'Thine all-powerful word leaped from heaven out of the royal throne, a stern warrior, into the midst of the doomed land, bearing as a sharp sword thine unfeigned commandment; and standing it filled all things with death; and while it touched the heaven it trode upon the earth.'

This last passage goes furthest in the way of personification. But in the other passages there is a tendency—we can hardly call it more—to objectify the 'word of God' and to treat it as though it had a substantive existence. This is, however, still some way short of the Logos both of St. John and of Philo.

Rather more may be said of the *Memra* of the Targums. These writings are indeed, in their extant form, of uncertain date. And yet I suspect, though I cannot prove, that our present texts faithfully preserve the interpretative tradition of the synagogues. The same tendencies were at work as far back as the beginning of the Christian era, and the probabilities are that they expressed themselves in the same way. The Jews were a conservative people; and the 'tradition of the elders' went on continuously without any real break.

We are always hampered by our want of knowledge. The works of Philo bulk large upon our shelves, and their contents naturally impress the imagination. Of the state of thought in Syria and Palestine we have far scantier information. I believe it to be possible that a doctrine like that of the Philonian Logos was

more widely diffused than we suppose. After all Philo grounded his use of the term largely upon the Stoics; and the Stoics were spread all over the Roman Empire; they were strong in Asia Minor. At the same time we should not be justified in drawing too much upon conjecture, where we have positive data in our hands. So far as Palestine goes, we have traces of a tendency but not of a system. In both Philo and St. John we have what might really be called a system. This creates a presumption that the connexion between them is not accidental.

The example of St. Paul may show us what an active stimulus to thought had been given by Christianity. In his case we see what far-reaching consequences were drawn from concentrated reflexion upon single detached verses of the Jewish Scriptures. We must not wholly put aside the possibility that the author of the Fourth Gospel let his thoughts work in the same manner. We shall see presently that on some important topics he has certainly done so. Still, if the doctrines of Philo came in his way, the easier hypothesis would be that he was influenced by them. The work of construction would in that case be lighter for him; he would find the half of it done ready to his hand.

### 2. *The Evangelist not a philosopher.*

It is a distinct question in what form we are to conceive of Philo's teaching as coming before him. The author of the Fourth Gospel was a thinker, but not a professed philosopher. So far as we can judge

from the writings of his that have come down to us, we should not be inclined to credit him with much philosophical erudition. The idea that we form to ourselves of the Evangelist is not that of a great reader always poring over books. I find it hard to think of him as sitting down to a deliberate study of the Jewish scholar's voluminous treatises. The mental habits of the two men are too different. The Evangelist has a shorter and more direct way of getting at the truth. He was more like the old Ionian philosophers, who looked up to the sky and out upon the earth, and set down the thoughts that rose in them in short loosely connected aphorisms. The author of the Fourth Gospel did not look so much without as within: he sank into his own consciousness, and at last brought out to light what he found there. He dwelt upon the past until it became luminous to him; and then he took up the pen.

We will consider presently what sort of hypothesis we may form as to the process by which the Evangelist came to assimilate Philonian ideas, if he did assimilate them. But it may be well, first, to try to realize rather more exactly the extent of the agreement and difference between the two writers.

### 3. *Points of Agreement with Philo.*

And, first, as to the agreement. I have said that Philo's philosophy, in spite of its decorative exuberance and prolixity, is yet at bottom a system. And in the main outline of that system the Evangelist coincides with him.

By the side of the Eternal, Philo has what he himself called 'a second God' (*πρὸς τὸν δεύτερον θεόν, ὅς ἐστιν ἐκείνου λόγος* Grill, *Entstehung d. vierten Evang.* p. 109); and this second God he called 'the Divine Word.' The Word was Himself God (*καλεῖ δὲ θεὸν τὸν πρεσβύτατον αὐτοῦ νυνὶ λόγον,* ibid.). The Word was the agent or instrument (*ὄργανον*) in creation (ibid., p. 110).

The action of the Word is not infrequently compared to that of Light; and although it is nowhere said that the Word is Life[1], there are contexts in which the ideas of light and life appear in connexion[2]. In like manner there is a certain amount of parallelism for the idea of the Word coming to his own and being rejected; it is the Word that makes the mind receptive of good; there are some who may be fitly called 'sons of God,' and those for whom this title is too high may at least model themselves after the pattern of the Word. The parallels for the later part of the Prologue are slighter, until we come to the last verse (ver. 18). Philo fully shares the conception of the transcendence of God, and speaks of the Logos as His 'prophet' and 'interpreter[3].'

There are many coincidences of idea in the attributes ascribed to the Logos, as existing in heaven, as revealing the name of God, as possessing supernatural knowledge and power, as continually at work, as eternal, as free from sin, as instructing and convincing, as

[1] Réville, *La doctrine du Logos*, p. 67.

[2] Grill, p. 218.

[3] Ibid., p. 114. Philo's word for 'interpreter,' however, is not cognate with that used by St. John.

dwelling in the souls of men, as high priest towards God, as the source of unity, of joy and peace, as imparting eternal life, as bridegroom, father, guide, steersman, shepherd, physician, as imparting manna, the food of the soul[4].

I am by no means clear that the case for the connexion of the Logos of St. John with the Logos of Philo is really much strengthened by these parallels. If we ask ourselves whether they necessarily imply literary dependence, I think we should have to answer in the negative. We have to remember that Philo and St. John alike have the Old Testament behind them. Whatever is suggested by this may as well come from it directly, and not through a further literary medium. And, when once we have the idea of the Logos, there are a number of epithets and metaphors that would go with it almost of themselves.

### 4. *Absence of Philonian Catch-words.*

On the other hand, when we examine the parallels adduced in detail, we cannot help noticing that many catch-words of the Philonian doctrine are entirely absent from the Fourth Gospel: *πρεσβύτατος* in many connexions (Grill, p. 106); *πρεσβύτατος υἱός* (p. 107); *πρωτόγονος* (pp. 106, 107); *μέσος τῶν ἄκρων, ἀμφοτέροις ὁμηρεύων* (p. 106); *λόγος ἀίδιος, ὁ ἐγγυτάτω* (sc. *θεοῦ*), *εἰκὼν ὑπάρχων θεοῦ* (a term which occurs in St. Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but not in St. John); *λόγος ἀρχέτυπος, σκιὰ θεοῦ* (p. 108); *μεθόριος στάς, μεθόριός τις*

[4] Ibid., pp. 115–26.

*θεοῦ (καὶ ἀνθρώπου) φύσις* (pp. 109 f.); *τῆς μακαρίας φύσεως ἐκμαγεῖον ἢ ἀπόσπασμα ἢ ἀπαύγασμα* (p. 115); *λόγος ἀόρατος καὶ σπερματικὸς καὶ τεχνικὸς καὶ θεῖος* (p. 112).

Among these expressions are several that at an early date entered into Christian literature, but they are not found in the Fourth Gospel.

It is probably to such examples as these that Dr. Drummond refers when he speaks of 'the total absence of Philo's special vocabulary not only in relation to God, but in regard to the Logos' (*Character*, &c., p. 24).

### 5. *More fundamental differences.*

It is of yet more importance that the conception of the Logos in Philo and in the Fourth Gospel presents great and fundamental differences.

I do not feel compelled to number among these that particular difference which is at once the most obvious and the most comprehensive. It is of course true that the Evangelist identifies the Logos with the person of Jesus Christ, whereas it is doubtful how far the Philonian Logos is to be regarded as in any sense personal. We always need to remember that the whole category of personality was wanting at the time when Philo wrote. The question whether such a conception as that of the Logos is personal, naturally forces itself upon us; we have a name for it, and we are accustomed to think of things as either personal or impersonal. Philo, on the contrary, had neither the name nor the idea corresponding to the name. Hence we are not surprised to find his

language fluctuating, to find him sometimes write as though the Logos were personal, and sometimes as though it were not. Where there is no clearly drawn boundary line between two ideas, it is easy to pass from one to the other without being aware of it.

With St. John the conditions are different. In any case it was he who took the decisive step of identifying the Divine Word with the person of Christ. Having once done this, his language necessarily became fixed; the ambiguities which attached to Philo's teaching were for him so far at an end. The personal element in the Johannean conception belongs not to the idea of the Logos but to the historical Christ; the originality of the Evangelist consists in uniting the Christ of history with the idea of the Logos, but whether that idea were personal or impersonal as it came to him was of secondary importance.

The divergence is really more significant when we observe that the Logos idea itself has a different content. The central point in Philo's conception is the philosophic idea of the Divine reason; the centre of St. John's is the religious idea of the Divine word, Divine utterance, creative, energizing, revealing. If we for a moment cease to think of the hypostatic and mediating aspect of the Word and dwell rather on the attributes and functions associated with it, we find ourselves naturally deserting Philo and going back to the Old Testament. When we glance over the string of passages quoted above, we see in them a truer counterpart to the real meaning of the Prologue. Ps. xxxiii. 6, with 2 Esdras vi. 43; Ps. cxlvii. 15, 18;

Wisd. ix. 1, bring out the creative activity of the Word; [Num. xi. 23; Hos. vi. 5]; Isa. xl. 8; lv. 10, 11; Wisd. xviii. 15, 16, bring out the broad providential, governing and energizing activity; Ps. cvii. 20; Wisd. xvi. 12, emphasize the redemptive activity in the narrower sense. All these ideas really underlie the Prologue, though they do not all receive equally explicit expression. The dominant thought of the Prologue is the thought of creation, revelation and redemption wrought by 'the living God'—that old comprehensive genuinely Hebraic name—but wrought by Him through His Son, who is also His Word.

The phrase that has just been used brings us round to another aspect of the Prologue, which also takes us away from Philo and back to the Old Testament, or to sources still more immediately Christian. If there is any truth in the contention that the doctrine of the Prologue governs the rest of the Gospel, it must be not directly as a doctrine of the Logos, but rather (as has been pointed out especially by Grill and H. J. Holtzmann) indirectly through those two great constituent conceptions of Life and Light which together make up, and are embraced under, the doctrine of the Logos. The antecedents of these two conceptions are to be sought far more in the Old Testament, and on the direct line of Christian development, than in any language of Philo's. As has just been said, 'the living God' is not only a strictly Hebraic and Old Testament idea, but one of the most fundamental of all the ideas of which the Hebrew mind and the Old Testament have been the vehicles.

The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is essentially based upon this idea, and works it out in a form that is also determined by the Old Testament. The significant combination of Life and Light, which is so characteristic of the Prologue and which so runs through the Gospel, can hardly have any other ultimate source than Ps. xxxvi. 9: 'With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light,' the first half of which has an important parallel in Jer. ii. 13, 'my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' There is of course the difference that what in the Old Testament is ascribed directly to Jehovah, in the Gospel is ascribed to the Logos. That is part of the Evangelist's method, which we may assume to be at work all through. But not only does the combination of Life and Light belong essentially to the Old Testament and not to Philo, but each of these ideas taken separately has without doubt an Old Testament and not a Philonic basis. It is true enough that Philo makes use of metaphors derived from 'Life' and 'Light,' and applies them to the Logos, as he is indeed profuse in metaphors of this character; they are part of his literary embroidery. It is also quite possible that the metaphors were in the first instance suggested to him by the same Old Testament passages. But the use in the Fourth Gospel is far deeper and more pregnant with meaning. It is also rightly urged that the use in the Gospel, more particularly of the conception of Life, is really

incompatible with Philo's system. The teaching of Philo is at bottom dualistic; for him matter is evil, and his object is to remove God from contact with it. In St. John there is no dualism. The writer conceives of matter as penetrated with the divine. Alike God and the Word of God work downwards and outwards, through spirit to the material envelope and vesture of spirit. There is no inconsistency between the spiritual and the material quickening, both of which are taught distinctly in the Gospel. 'As the Father raiseth the death and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom he will' (John v. 21); 'As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself' (ver. 26). Both Father and Son are a principle of life which takes possession at once of soul and body, which imparts alike ethical and spiritual vitality to the disciple of Christ on earth, and that eternal life which is not something distinct from this but really the continuation of it in the world to come. No one can fail to see the powerful comprehensiveness of this idea, which incorporates and assimilates with ease such Jewish notions as that of the resurrection of the body, where Philo's dualism makes a break and condemns his system either to superficiality or inconsequence.

Another point that would be of importance if the facts were really as is often alleged, is the use of the term Paraclete. Philo, like St. John, has this term; and if it were true that with him too it is a designation of, or directly in connection with, the Logos, that

would greatly strengthen the case for the view that St. John was really borrowing from him. But the doubts on this head, first raised by Heinze, and more recently enforced by Dr. Drummond and Dr. Grill, appear to be perfectly valid[1]. It is not the Logos that is called Paraclete, but the Cosmos[2].

We observe that the Cosmos, which is compared to the high priest's vestments, is also described as 'son (of God).' This is very contrary to the usage of the Evangelist, for whom the Cosmos (in the sense in which he uses the word) is far more the enemy of God than His son.

All these points together make up a wide divergence between Philo's doctrine and that of the Fourth Gospel. They go far to justify Harnack's epigrammatic saying that 'even the Logos has little more in common with that of Philo than the name, and its mention at the beginning of the book is a mystery, not the solution of one' (*History of Dogma*, i. 97). We may discount the epigram a little, as one has to discount all epigrams; but when we have done this, there remains in it a large and substantial truth.

### iv. *Possible avenues of connexion.*

It does not follow that I would deny all connexion between the Philonian Logos and St. John's. My doubt is whether this connexion can have been literary. I find it difficult to picture to myself the Evangelist sitting down to master the diffuse tomes

[1] Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, ii. 237–9; Grill, pp. 133–6.

[2] The main passage is *Vit. Mos.* iii. 14.

of Philo. Where is the interest that would impel him to do this? Philo is a student and a philosopher. He is a philosopher who operates with a sacred text, and therefore has unlimited opportunity for applying and expounding his philosophy. But the Evangelist is interested in none of his theorems for their own sake. There is only one thing that he seeks. He wants a formula to express the cosmical significance of the Person of Christ. When he has got that, he is satisfied. For the purpose of filling up his formula and working out its meaning, he goes not to Philo but to the Old Testament. There, and in his own experience, he finds all the data that he needs.

I believe that there is a connexion between Greek, or Hellenistic, speculation and the Fourth Gospel. But I can conceive of this best through the medium of personal intercourse and controversy. How did St. Paul get his first knowledge of Christianity? Doubtless through his own vehement attacks upon Christians, which he found so calmly and steadfastly resisted; or, it may be, through the disputations in the synagogues and in the law courts, of which he was the witness. We may well believe that St. John extended his knowledge in the same way. Partly he would learn from foe, and partly from friend. In a place like Ephesus he would from time to time hold controversy with philosophers of the stamp of Justin. But, apart from this, in the Christian community itself he would find germs of teaching such as had been planted by the Alexandrian Jew Apollos. We are left to conjecture;

and we have so few positive data to go upon, that our conjectures are of necessity vague. The Evangelist need not have waited for his arrival in Ephesus to come in contact with the idea of the Logos, not perhaps in its full Philonian form but in a form that might lead up to the Philonian. Philo (as we have seen) drew largely from the Stoics; and there were Stoics in the cities of Decapolis [1]. At a centre like Antioch they would be found in greater numbers; and at such a centre it would be quite possible to fall in with a wandering disciple or disciples of Philo. I have long thought that it would facilitate our reconstruction of the history of early Christian thought, if we could assume an anticipatory stage of Johannean teaching, localized somewhere in Syria, before the Apostle reached his final home at Ephesus. This would account more easily than any other hypothesis for the traces of this kind of teaching in the *Didaché*, and in Ignatius, as well as in some of the earliest Gnostic systems.

We cannot verify anything. We have no materials for the purpose. We can only deal a little with probabilities. But behind all probabilities it is enough for us to know that there must have been many avenues

[1] That accomplished scholar P. Wendland points to the tendency to attach the Stoical idea of the λόγος specially to Hermes and the Egyptian Thoth. He quotes from Cornutus (*temp.* Nero) τυγχάνει δὲ ὁ Ἑρμῆς ὁ λόγος ὤν, ὃν ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ οἱ θεοί. Hermes is the messenger of the gods, and communicates their will to men; and it is conceivable that the use of the term λόγος in connexion with him may have in some slight degree suggested, or prepared the way for, its use in connexion with the new revelation. See *Christentum u. Hellenismus* (1902), p. 7.

by which the conception of the Logos may well have reached the Apostle besides that of the direct and systematic study of the writings of Philo.

## II. *Relation of the Prologue to the rest of the Gospel.*

### 1. *View of Harnack.*

Mention has been made above of Harnack's view as to the relation of the Prologue to the main body of the Gospel. He holds that the Prologue is really separable from this, that it is of the nature of a postscript, or after-thought, rather than a preface. He regards it as not so much the statement of a programme to be worked out in the Gospel as a sort of 'covering letter,' intended to commend the work to cultivated Gentile or Hellenistic readers.

This view has in its favour the obvious fact that the word λόγος, wherever it occurs in the body of the Gospel, is used in its ordinary and familiar sense, and not in the special sense given to it in the Prologue. In face of this fact it seems at first sight difficult to treat the Prologue as containing the leading idea that runs through and determines the character of the rest of the Gospel. And yet it is well known that many writers have so treated it—and conspicuously the two French scholars, M. Jean Réville and the Abbé Loisy.

There are two ways of escaping the inference just referred to. One is that of which I have just been speaking, the method adopted by Dr. Julius Grill in his recent work on the origin of the Fourth Gospel, to take as the leading idea, not the Logos but the

combination of Life and Light which the Evangelist gives as equivalent to the Logos [1]. The other is to follow in the track of M. Loisy, and to treat the doctrine of the Logos as a summary name for the whole 'theology of the Incarnation [2].'

### 2. *View of Grill.*

It is easy (as I have said) to bring under the head of Life and Light all the miracles in the Gospel, from the miracle at Cana down to the Raising of Lazarus and even the miraculous Draught of Fishes in chap. xxi. Both the first 'sign' and the last are instances of the assertion of creative power, and the Healing of the Blind Man in chap. ix, where this aspect is more subordinate, illustrates the activity of Christ as the Light of the World, a text on which the concluding paragraph of the chapter enlarges.

Besides the miracles there are many other allusions to these ideas of Life and Light: notably to the 'living water' in the discourse with the Samaritan woman (John iv. 10–14); to the 'bread of life' in the discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum (vi. 31–58); in the comment apparently suggested by the libation at the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 37 f.); in the sayings on Light in viii. 12, xi. 9 f., as well as in chap. ix.

There can be no doubt at all that these ideas of

[1] *Entstehung d. vierten Evang.* i. 4–31, 87 ff.

[2] *Le Quatrième Evangile*, p. 98: 'Les observations précédentes et tout ce qu'on a remarqué touchant le caractère du quatrième Evangile prouvent suffisamment que la théologie de l'incarnation est la clef du livre tout entier, et qu'elle le domine depuis la première ligne jusqu'à la dernière.'

Light and Life are quite fundamental to the Evangelist, and that they fill a large place in his mind. But to say this is not quite the same thing as to say that the Gospel is constructed upon them. The Evangelist has told us in set terms on what the ground-plan of his Gospel is constructed; 'these (things) are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name' (xx. 31). There is no need to seek for any other definition of the object and plan of the Gospel than this.

### 3. *View of Loisy.*

The same verse may help us to form an estimate of the theory of M. Loisy. So far as 'the theology of the Incarnation' is meant to express the same thing, the phrase is certainly justified. And if M. Loisy intends it to be at the same time a paraphrase for the doctrine of the Logos, we can have no objection. At least the only objection we need have would be that he is using a vaguer and more general term, when he might use one that is both definite and characteristic. As a rule, one is more likely to get at the heart of a writer's meaning by laying stress on the peculiar and individual elements in his teaching, and not on that which he shares with others.

But the question how far either M. Loisy or Dr. Grill has succeeded in defining the root-idea of the Gospel is after all only secondary. The real issue is not as to the accuracy of the definition, but as

to the nature of the relation which is pre-supposed between the root-idea, the principle which covers the plan and object of the Gospel, and the narrative of which the main body of the Gospel consists. If I may speak for a moment of the leading idea, not of St. John but of M. Loisy, I am afraid that the tendency, if not the purpose, of his whole book is to convict the author of the Gospel of writing fiction where he professes to write fact. 'The theology of the Incarnation' is a euphemism which is meant to describe the Gospel as from end to end allegory and symbol, the product of an idea and not of reality.

M. Loisy, we all know, occupies a peculiar position. His criticism is radical and destructive, but he believes himself to bring back as faith what his criticism has destroyed. Few recent writers have left less of the Fourth Gospel standing as solid history; but at the same time he is a dutiful son of his Church, and what the Church accepts he also accepts as true. There can hardly be any doubt that the Church, as far back as we can trace its convictions, regarded the Fourth Gospel as strictly historical. If it had not done so, it is very questionable whether the Church itself would have taken the shape it did. There are many in these days who, if they followed M. Loisy as a critic, would find it very hard to follow him as a theologian. They are not a little perplexed to understand how he himself can reconcile the two trains of his thinking. That, however, is his own affair, with which outsiders are not concerned. But they are greatly concerned to know whether or not

his criticism is sound. There is no doubt at all that the Fourth Gospel expresses the Evangelist's 'theology of the Incarnation.' It expresses it, but is it the product of it? Has it no more substantial foundation than an idea? Is it history, or is it fiction? That is the great and vital question to which we must address ourselves more directly in the next lecture.

# LECTURE VII

## The Christology of the Gospel

### 1. *The Gospel not a Biography.*

Once more we fall back upon our main position. The Evangelist is writing a spiritual Gospel, and his whole procedure is dominated by that one fact. His object is to set forth Christ as Divine, not only as Messiah but as Son of God, as an object of faith which brings life to the believer.

It follows that all criticism which does not take account of this—and how large a part of the strictures upon the Gospel does not take account of it!—is really wide of the mark. M. Loisy, for instance, brings a long indictment against the Gospel for not containing things that it never professed to contain. It never professed to be a complete picture of the Life of the Lord. It never professed to show Him in a variety of human relationships. It never professed to give specimens of His ethical teaching simply as such. It did not profess to illustrate, and it does not illustrate, even the lower side of those activities that might be called specially divine, as (e. g.) the casting out of demons.

The Gospel is written upon the highest plane throughout. It seeks to answer the question *who* it was that appeared upon earth, and suffered on

Calvary, and rose from the dead and left disciples who revered and adored Him. And this Evangelist takes a flight beyond his fellows inasmuch as he asks the question who Christ was in His essential nature: What was the meaning—not merely the local but the cosmical meaning—of this great theophany?

It is not surprising if in the pursuit of this object the Evangelist has laid himself open to the charge of being partial or onesided. Those who use such terms are really, as we have seen, judging by the standard of the modern biography, which is out of place. The Gospel is, admittedly and deliberately, not an attempt to set forth the whole of a life, but just a selection of scenes, a selection made with a view to a limited and sharply-defined purpose. The complaint is made that it is monotonous, and the complaint is not without reason. The monotony was involved, we might say, from the outset in the concentration of aim which the writer himself acknowledges. And in addition to this it is characteristic of the writer that his thought is of the type which revolves more than it progresses. The picture has not that lifelike effect which is given by the setting of a single figure in a variety of circumstances. The variety of circumstance was included among those bodily or external aspects (*τὰ σωματικά*) which the writer considered to have been sufficiently treated by his predecessors. He described for himself a narrower circle. And it was because he kept within that circle, because he goes on striking the same chord, that we receive the impression of repetition and monotony. Perhaps the intensity of the

effect makes up for its want of extension. But at any rate the Evangelist was within his rights in choosing his own programme, and we must not blame him for doing what he undertook to do.

We may blame him, however, if within his self-chosen limits the picture that he has drawn for us is misleading. That is the central point which we must now go on to test. The object of the Gospel would be called in modern technical language to exhibit a Christology. Is that Christology true? Does it satisfy the tests that we are able to apply to it? Can we find a suitable place for it in the total conception that we form of the Apostolic Age? Does it belong to the Apostolic Age at all; or must we, to understand it, come down below the time of the Apostles? To answer these questions we must compare the Christology of the Fourth Gospel with that of the other Apostolic writings, and more particularly with that of the Synoptic Gospels, of St. Paul, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It does not take us long to see that the Christology of the Fourth Gospel has the closest affinity with this group of Epistles—we may say, with the leading Epistles of St. Paul and with that other interesting Epistle of which we know, perhaps, or partly know, the readers but do not know the author. It is worth while to bring in this because the unmistakable quotation from it in Clement of Rome proves it to belong to the Apostolic Age.

### 2. *The Christology of St. John compared with that of St. Paul and of the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

The meeting-point of all the authorities just mentioned—indeed we might say the focus and centre of the whole New Testament—is the title 'Son of God.' But whereas the Synoptic Gospels work up to this title, St. John with St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews work downwards or onwards from it. What I mean is this. The Synoptic Gospels show us how, through the conception of the Messiah and the titles equivalent to it, by degrees a point was reached at which the faith of the disciples found its most adequate expression in the name 'Son of God.' The culminating point is of course St. Peter's confession represented at its fullest in the form adopted by St. Matthew, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 16). In the Synoptic Gospels, and we may say also in the historic order of events, this confession is a climax, gradually reached; and we are allowed to see the process by which it was reached. 'Son of God' is the highest of all the equivalents for 'Messiah.' And in the Synoptic Gospels we have unrolled before us, wonderfully preserved by a remarkable and we may say truly providential accuracy of reproduction with hardly the consciousness of a guiding idea, the historic evolution, spread over the whole of the public ministry, by which at its end the little knot of disciples settled upon this term as the best and amplest expression of its belief in its Master.

We have seen that the Fourth Gospel is by no means wanting in traces of this evolution. But these too are traces, preserved incidentally and almost accidentally, without any deliberate purpose on the part of the author: they are the product of his historical sense, as distinct from the special object and the large idea that he had before his mind in writing his Gospel. This special object and large idea presuppose the title as it were full-blown. It was not to be expected that an evangelist sitting down to write towards the end of the first century should unwind the threads of the skein which, some fifty or sixty years before, had brought his consciousness to the point where it was. To him looking back, the evolutionary process was foreshortened; and we have seen that as a consequence he allowed the language that he used about the beginning of the ministry to be somewhat more definite than on strictly historical principles it should have been. That he should do so was natural and inevitable—indeed from the point of view of the standards of his time there was no reason why he should be on his guard against such anticipations. If we distinguish between the gradual unfolding of the narrative and the total conception present to the mind of the writer throughout from the beginning, we should say that this conception assumes for Christ the fullest significance of Divine Sonship.

More than this: we see, when we come to study the Gospel in detail, that the writer not only assumes the full idea of Sonship but has also dwelt upon it and thought about it and followed it out through all

the logic of its contents. We may say that it is not only he that has done so but practically all the thinking portion of the Church of his time. We may see this from the comparison of St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, not to speak of other New Testament writers. The Synoptists hardly come under the head of thinkers. They are content to set down facts and impressions without analysis and without reflection. But long before St. John sat down to write, those who really were thinkers had evidently asked themselves what was the meaning and what was the origin of that title 'Son of God' by which the Church was agreed to designate its Master. The more active minds had evidently pressed the inquiry far home. They did not stop short at the Baptism; they did not stop short at the Birth: they saw that the Divine Sonship of Christ stretched back far beyond these recent events; they saw that it was rooted in the deepest depths of Godhead. It is true both of St. Paul and of the Epistle to the Hebrews—that is, assuming that the Epistle to the Colossians is St. Paul's—that they have not only the doctrine of the Son but the doctrine of the Logos, all but the name.

Now I know that there are many who will not agree with me; I know also that the position is not easy to prove, though, as we shall see, I believe that there are a number of definite facts that at least suggest it. But for myself I suspect so strongly as to be practically sure that in these processes of thought the apostolic theologians, as we may call them, were not altogether original.

They were not without a precursor; they did not invent their ideas for the first time. I believe that we shall most reasonably account for the whole set of phenomena if we suppose that there had been intimations, hints, *Anhaltspunkte*, in the discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We have as a matter of fact such hints or intimations in the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist may have expanded and accentuated them a little—he may have dotted the i's and crossed the t's—but I believe that it is reasonable to hold that they had been really there. The Founding of Christianity is in any case a very great phenomenon; and it seems to me simpler and easier, and in all ways more probable, to refer the features which constitute its greatness to a single source, to the one source which is really the fountain-head of all. Without that one source the others would never have been what they were.

The fact that St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews had substantially arrived at a Logos doctrine before any extant writing has mentioned the name, seems to throw light on the order of thought by which the Fourth Evangelist himself arrived at his doctrine of the Logos. It is the coping-stone of the whole edifice, not the foundation-stone. It is a comprehensive synthesis which unites under one head a number of scattered ideas. From this point of view it would be more probable that the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel was a true preface, written after the rest of the work to sum up and bind together in one mighty paragraph the ideas that are really leading ideas, though scattered

up and down the Gospel. Whether it was actually written last does not matter. What I mean is that the philosophic synthesis of the events recorded in the Gospel came to the Evangelist last in the order of his thought; the order was, history first and then philosophic synthesis of the history. No doubt the synthesis was really complete before the Apostle began to write his Gospel; the writing of the Prologue may or may not have followed the order of his thought. It may have been, as Harnack thinks, a sort of commendatory letter sent out with the Gospel; or it may be that the Gospel was written out in one piece upon a plan present from the first to the writer's mind. The order of genesis and the order of production do not always coincide; and it is really a very secondary consideration whether in any particular instance they did or not.

We do not know exactly at what stage in his career the Evangelist grasped the idea of the Logos. We should be inclined to think comparatively late, from the fact that it has not been allowed to intrude into the historical portion of the Gospel. The various ideas which are summed up under the conception of the Logos appear there independently and in other connexions. As we have just seen, in St. Paul also and in the Epistle to the Hebrews the arch is fully formed before the key-stone is dropped into it.

Whatever we may think about this, there is a close parallelism between the whole theology, including the Christology, of St. Paul and St. John. Both start from the thought of an Incarnation (John i. 14; Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 4; Phil. ii. 7, 8; Col. i. 15; and with the latter

part of the same verse, cp. Col. i. 19; ii. 9). In both St. John and St. Paul the union of the Son with the Father is not only moral but a union of essential nature (cp. John i. 1, 2, 14; x. 30, 38; xiv. 10, 11, 20; xvii. 21, 23 with 2 Cor. v. 19; Col. i. 13, 15, 19; ii. 9). Between the Son and the Father there is the bond of mutual love, of a love supreme and unique (that is the real meaning of *μονογενής* in John i. 14, 18; cp. xvii. 23, 24, 26 and Rom. viii. 3, 32; Eph. i. 6; Col. i. 13). As a consequence of this relation between the Son and the Father, which has its roots in the eternal past (John i. 1, 2; xvii. 5, 24), there was also complete union of will in the work of the Son upon earth (John v. 30; vi. 38; xiv. 31; xvii. 16: cp. Phil. ii. 8; Heb. v. 7, 8). Thus the acts of the Son are really the acts of the Father, the natural expression of that perfect intimacy in which they stand to each other (v. 19, 20; viii. 29; x. 25, 37, 38). The reciprocity between them is absolute, it is seen in the perfection of their mutual knowledge (vii. 29; viii. 19; x. 15; xvii. 25); so that the teaching of the Son is really the teaching of the Father (vii. 16; viii. 26, 28, 38; xii. 49, 50; xiv. 10, 24; xv. 15). What the Son is, the Father also is. Hence the life and character and words of the Son, taken as a whole, constitute a revelation of the Father such as had never been given before (vi. 46; xiv. 7–10: cp. i. 14, 18) [1].

Thus we are brought to another central idea of the Fourth Gospel, the function of the Son as revealing

[1] A few sentences here are repeated from my article in Hastings, *D. B.* iv. 575.

the Father. For this, again, we have a parallel in an impassioned passage of St. Paul:

'The god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. iv. 4–6).

It may be true that this idea, though central with St. John, is subordinate with St. Paul; but it is distinctly recognized—just as, conversely, the doctrine of the Atonement, though clearly implied, is less prominent with St. John than with St. Paul.

The close resemblance between the teaching of St. John and St. Paul does not end with the exposition of the character and mission of the incarnate Son; it is exhibited no less in what is said about the Holy Spirit. The teaching of the Fourth Gospel on the subject of the Spirit repeats in a remarkable way certain leading features in its teaching about the Son. The Father is *in* the Son (as we have seen), and the Son is one with the Father; and yet the Son is distinct (in the language of later theology, a distinct Person) from the Father; and in like manner the Paraclete is 'another' than the Son (xiv. 16), and is sent by the Son (xv. 26; xvi. 7); and yet in the coming of the Spirit the Son Himself returns to His people (xiv. 18; cf. iii. 28).

Here again the parallel is quite remarkable between

St. Paul and St. John. If we take a passage like Rom. viii. 9–11 we see that, in this same connexion of the work of the indwelling Spirit among the faithful, He is described at one moment as the Spirit of God, at another as the Spirit of Christ, and almost in the same breath we have the phrase, 'If Christ is in you' as an equivalent for 'If the Spirit of Christ is in you.' The latter phrase is fuller and more exact, but with St. Paul, as well as with St. John, it is Christ Himself who comes to His own in His Spirit.

No writer that I know has worked out the whole of this relation with more philosophical and theological fulness and accuracy than Dr. Moberly in his *Atonement and Personality*. And I am tempted to quote one short passage of his (where I should like to quote many), because it seems to me to sum up in few words the fundamental teaching of St. Paul and St. John.

'Christ in you, or the Spirit of Christ in you; these are not different realities; but the one is the method of the other. It is in the Person of Christ that the Eternal God is revealed in manhood to man. It is in the Person of His Spirit that the Incarnate Christ is Personally present within the spirit of each several man. The Holy Ghost is mainly revealed to us as the Spirit *of the Incarnate* [1].'

It is to the language of St. Paul and St. John that we go for proof that the Holy Spirit is a Person; but it is also from their language that we learn how intimately He is associated with the other Divine Persons.

We are led up to what is in later theological language

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 194. Compare the important and detailed exposition, pp. 154–9, 168 f., 180–2.

called the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is well known that some of the most important data for this doctrine are derived from the Fourth Gospel, especially from the last discourse. And whatever is found in St. John may be paralleled in substance from St. Paul.

3. *Comparison with the Synoptic Gospels.*

Now I am not going to maintain that, if one of us had been an eye-witness of the Life of Christ, the profound teaching of which I have just given an outline would have seemed to him to bear the same kind of proportion to the sum total of His teaching that it bears in the Fourth Gospel. By the essential conditions of the case it could not be so. It is this particular kind of teaching which the Evangelist specially wishes to enforce; and, in order to enforce it, he has singled out for his narrative just those scenes in which it came up—those and, broadly speaking, no others.

We have seen that in regard to this teaching there is a very large amount of coincidence between St. Paul and St. John. We shall have presently to consider what is the nature and ground of this coincidence, how it arose and what relation it implies between the two Apostles. But before going on to this, we must first ask ourselves how far it can be verified by comparison with the Synoptic Gospels. It is right to look for such verification, however much we may be convinced that these Gospels are an extremely partial and fragmentary representation of all that Christ said and did. Even a modern biography,

contemplated perhaps during the life-time of its subject, and actually begun soon after his death, will only contain a tithe (if he is a really great man) of his more significant acts and sayings. But those who attempted to write what we wrongly call Lives of Christ did not, as it would seem, for the most part even begin to do so or make preparations for beginning for some thirty years after the Crucifixion, when the company of the apostles and intimate disciples was already dispersed, or at least in no near contact with the writers [1]. We have only to ask ourselves what we should expect in such circumstances. And I think we should find that our expectations were fully borne out if we were to compare together the contents of the oldest documents, those of the *Logia* with the Mark-Gospel, and those of the special source or sources of St. Luke with both. The amount and value of the gleanings which each attempt left for those who came after tells its own story.

But if we do not expect that the Synoptic Gospels would be in the least degree exhaustive in the materials they have preserved for us from the Life of Christ, we might be sure that their defects would be greatest in regard to the class of teaching with which we are at present concerned. It is teaching of a kind that might perhaps haunt the minds of a few gifted

[1] I do not doubt that the most active period for the putting together of material for Gospels was the decade 60–70 A. D. At the beginning of this period St. Mark had not yet taken up his task; and his Gospel forms the base of the other two Synoptics. The Matthaean *Logia* perhaps by this time were collected.

and far-sighted individuals, but would certainly fall through the meshes of the mind of the average man. It was this very fact, as we have seen, which prompted the Fourth Evangelist to write his Gospel. The externals of the Lord's Life he recognized as having been adequately told; but it was just the profoundest teaching and some of the most significant acts that had escaped telling, and that he himself desired to rescue from oblivion.

We must therefore be content if we can verify a few particulars. We must not from the outset expect to be able to do more. And we must be still more content if these particulars show by their character that they are fragments from a much larger wreckage, that they are what we might call chance survivals of what had once existed on a much larger scale.

We concluded our sketch of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel by speaking of the data which it contained for the doctrine of the Trinity. These however are only data. It is perhaps a little surprising that the only approach to a formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity occurs not in St. John but at the end of the Gospel of St. Matthew (xxviii. 19). I am of course well aware that this part of the First Gospel is vigorously questioned by the critics. I am prepared to believe myself that the passage is a late incorporation in the Gospel; and antecedently I should not say that we had strong guarantees for its literal accuracy. But then—this is an old story, so far as I am concerned, and I must apologize for introducing it, but I cannot leave the point unnoticed—how are

we to explain that other remarkable verse that occurs at the end of the second Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xiii. 14)? This familiar three-fold benediction must have had antecedents; it must, I should say, have had a long train of antecedents. The most adequate explanation of it seems to me to be that the train of antecedents started from something corresponding, something said at some time or other, in the teaching of our Lord[1]. I fully believe that the hints and intimations of a Trinity that we find scattered about the New Testament have their origin ultimately in the teaching of Christ. Apart from this, how could the conception have been reached at so early a date? For 2 Corinthians must in any case fall between 53–57 A. D.[2]

Let us work our way backwards through another of the hints. We have seen that the coming of the Paraclete is described in the Fourth Gospel as a return of Christ to His own. Are there any

[1] I cannot regard this argument as at all invalidated by Dr. Drummond's three sermons, *The Pauline Benediction* (London, 1897). At the same time I can quite accept the view that the Apostle's words are 'the seed rather than the final expression of Christian theology.'

[2] With the above may be compared Dr. Hort's comment (ad. loc.) on 1 St. Peter, i. 1, 2, and other Trinitarian passages referred to in illustration: 'In no passage is there any indication that the writer was independently working out a doctrinal scheme: a recognized belief or idea seems to be everywhere presupposed. How such an idea could arise in the mind of St. Paul or any other apostle without sanction from a Word of the Lord, it is difficult to imagine: and this consideration is a sufficient answer to the doubts which have, by no means unnaturally, been raised whether Matt. xxviii. 19 may not have been added or recast in a later generation.'

parallels for this in the Synoptic Gospels? Not exactly, because the two things are not brought into combination. But we have on the one hand distinct predictions of the activity of the Holy Spirit after the departure of Christ. For instance:

'When they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak. . . . For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you' (Matt. x. 19, 20).

And in St. Luke's version of the promise as to answers to prayer, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as imparted to the believer:

'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' (Luke xi. 13).

The gift of the Holy Spirit in connexion with prayer is one of the topics in the Last Discourse as recorded by St. John. On the other hand there are in the Synoptics remarkable allusions to the continued presence of Christ with His people. Such is that which follows immediately upon the verse about Baptism in the threefold Name: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' And in Matt. xviii. 20, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them[1].' Wendt connects this last passage with the instances in which acts done in the name of Christ and for the benefit of His followers are spoken of as though they were done to Him. For instance, 'Whosoever shall receive one

[1] Compare the Fifth of the Oxyrhynchus *Logia*.

of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me' (Mark ix. 37; cf. Luke x. 16; Matt. xxv. 40). Wendt goes on to dilute the meaning of these allusions. He would make them mean no more than that such actions have the same value and the same reward as though they were done to Christ. But the ascending series is against this: 'Whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me.'

And once again we have to ask, what is the origin of all those passages in the Epistles, where St. Paul speaks of the *solidarity* between Christ and the whole body of the faithful, so that in that extraordinary phrase the sufferings of His Apostle actually fill up or supplement the sufferings of Christ (*ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, Col. i. 24)?

The existence of such passages suggests the probability—and indeed more than probability—that there were others like them, but more directly didactic and expository, which have not been preserved. The Fourth Gospel contains some specimens of this teaching; but that Gospel and the Synoptics together rather give specimens of a class of teaching than make any approach to an exhaustive record of all that our Lord must have said on these topics.

We have seen that the Synoptic Gospels distinctly represent our Lord as the Jewish Messiah. They represent Him as filled from the first with the consciousness of a mission that is beyond that of the ordinary teacher or prophet. He taught as one having

authority, and not as the scribes. The demoniacs recognized in Him a presence before which they were awed and calmed. He took upon Himself to forgive sins, with the assurance that those whom He forgave God also would forgive. He called Himself, in one very ancient form of narrative, 'Lord of the sabbath.' He did not hesitate to review the whole course of previous revelation, and to propound in His own name a new law superseding the old. He evidently regarded His work on earth as possessing an extraordinary value. He was Himself a greater than Solomon, a greater than Jonah; and, what is perhaps more remarkable, He seems to regard His own claim as exceeding that of the whole body of the poor ('Ye have the poor always with you . . . but Me ye have not always'). As His teaching went on, He began to speak as though His relation to the human race was not confined to His life among them, but as though it would be continued and renewed on a vast scale after His death; He would come again in the character of Judge, and He would divide mankind according to the service which (in a large sense) they had rendered, or not rendered, to Him.

These are a number of particulars which helped to bring out what there was extraordinary in His mission. By what formula was it to be described and covered? It was described under the Jewish name 'Messiah,' with its various equivalents. Among those equivalents, that which the apostolic generation deemed most adequate was 'the Son of God.' One of the Synoptic Gospels says expressly that He applied this title to

Himself (Matt. xxvii. 43), and it is quite possible that He did so, but critical grounds prevent us from laying stress upon the phrase. On two great occasions (the Baptism and Transfiguration) the title is given to Him by a voice from heaven. But only in a single passage (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22) is there anything like an exposition of what is contained in the title. The mutual relation of the Father and the Son is expressed as a perfect insight on the part of each, not only into the mind, but into the whole being and character of the other.

Different critics have dealt with this saying in different ways. Harnack, in his famous lectures, gave it the prominence that it deserves, but at the same time reduced its meaning, in accordance with his generally reduced conception of Christianity. His exegesis tended to limit the peculiar knowledge of the Son to His special apprehension of the truth of Divine Fatherhood. M. Loisy demurs to this. He says:

'There is clearly involved a transcendental relation, which throws into relief the high dignity of the Christ, and not a psychological reality, of which one cannot see the possibility in respect to God. The terms Father and Son are not here purely religious, but they have already become metaphysical; theological and dogmatic speculation has been able to take hold of them without greatly modifying their sense. There is only one Father and only one Son, constituted, in a manner, by the knowledge that they have of one another, absolute entities the relations of which are almost absolute [1].'

Perhaps this is a little exaggerated in the opposite

[1] *L'Évangile et L'Église*, p. 78 f.

direction to Harnack. Still I believe it to be in the main right. The mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son rests upon their essential community of nature. But, having recognized this, M Loisy goes on, with what I cannot but think singular levity, to cast doubt upon the passage. He regards the whole context in St. Matthew as a sort of psalm based upon the last chapter (li) of Ecclesiasticus; and he ascribes it not to our Lord, but to the tradition of the early Church.

This is far from being a favourable specimen of Biblical criticism. We have only to set the two passages side by side to estimate its value. It is possible enough that there are reminiscences not only of this, but of other passages of Ecclesiasticus and of other books in the mind of speaker or writer[1]. We might conceive of a defining phrase here or there being due to the Evangelist and suggested by such reminiscences. Or we might conceive of Christ Himself going back in thought (as well He might) to the invitation of personified Wisdom. There would be nothing strange in either supposition. The New Testament everywhere takes up the threads of the Old, and is not confined to the Jewish Canon. But in any case the materials thus supplied are entirely recast; and the whole passage ('Come unto Me,' &c.) bears the inimitable stamp of one Figure, and only one[2].

[1] H. J. Holtzmann, for instance, points to Is. xiv. 3; xxviii. 12; lv. 1–3; Jer. vi. 16; xxxi. 2, 25, but especially Ecclus. iii. 6; vi. 24, 25, 28, 29; li, 23–30.

[2] Contrast the treatment of the passage by M. Loisy with the way

The truth is that in the Synoptic Gospels, as well as in the Fourth, there is really a mysterious background, though we see less of the attempt to pierce it. These simple-looking sayings are not so simple as they seem. To take, for instance, one upon which we have touched, 'he that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me.' The words are almost childlike in their simplicity, and yet they lead up to the highest heights, and down to the deepest depths. No doubt we may rationalize it all away, if we please. We may shut out the mystery from our minds. But we shall not keep it out for long.

> Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as nature's self,
> To rap and knock and enter in our soul.

There is a movement perhaps on a large scale, like the Bentham period in England in the first half of the nineteenth century, or the sceptical and deistical period a hundred years earlier, and it seems as though everything were to be made clear and intelligible, and the conscience and soul of men were not to be troubled by phantoms any more. And then there come 'Lake

in which it is singled out by Matthew Arnold (*Literature and Dogma*, p. 214 f.). Indeed the course of the most recent criticism has borne in upon me more and more that, far from being a stumbling-block, it is really the key to any true understanding of the Christ of the Gospels. If we had not had the passage, we should have had to invent one like it!

Poets,' or an 'Oxford Movement,' and the other world, the old world, all comes back again; and the forces that try to restrain it are snapped like Samson's withes.

The reason appears to be that these very clear outlines are always obtained by omissions or suppressions that are artificial, and do not do justice to the wonderful richness and subtlety either of the human mind or or the powers that work upon it.

### 4. *Interpretation of these Relations between the Synoptic Gospels, St. Paul and St. John: Alternative Constructions.*

These comparisons that we have just been instituting between the Synoptic Gospels, St. Paul, and St. John raise a very large question, a question involving nothing less than our whole construction of the history of the Apostolic Age.

It is becoming more and more the custom with the left wing of critical writers to make the most fundamental part of Christianity, the pivot teaching of the New Testament, an invention of St. Paul's. St. John is only the chief of his disciples. According to these writers primitive Christianity, the genuine Christianity, loses itself in the sands, or is represented, let us say, deducting the stress on the Mosaic Law, by the sect of the Ebionites. It is St. Paul who strikes out the new road; and the writer whom we call St. John follows him in it. The attempt of this later writer to supply a historical basis for Paulinism, holds good only

in appearance. The teaching which it puts into the mouth of Jesus is in no sense an antecedent of the teaching of St. Paul, but a product of it.

Here, for instance, is a trenchant statement of the position.

'The Fourth Gospel derived this importance, lasting long beyond the time of his birth, from its having bridged over the chasm between Jesus and St. Paul, and from its having carried the Pauline Gospel back into the life and teaching of Jesus. It is only through this gospel that Paulinism attains to absolute dominion in the theology of the Church. . . . Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, is for John as well as Paul the core and centre of Christianity. And, moreover, John's Christology is Pauline in all its important features—the Son of God who was with God in heaven, and was sent by God upon earth, the Mediator of creation, the God of Revelation of the Old Testament, the Son of Man from heaven, as Paul, too, called Him. And the chief object of His coming into the world is the atonement by means of His death. . . . The whole of the Johannine theology is a natural development from the Pauline. It is Paulinism modified to meet the needs of the sub-apostolic age. Two important consequences follow from this. There is no Johannine theology by the side of and independent of the Pauline. Luther already felt this clearly, and he understood something of the matter. John and Paul are not two theological factors, but one. Were we to accept that St. John formed his conception of Christianity either originally or directly from Jesus' teaching, we should have to refuse St. Paul all originality, for we should leave him scarcely a single independent thought. But it is St. Paul that is original; St. John is not. In St. Paul's letters we look, as through a window, into the factory where these great thoughts flash forth and are

developed; in St. John we see the beginning of their transformation and decay.' Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, ii. pp. 262, 264, 274 f. (E. T.).

Nothing could be clearer. And by reason of his clearness and boldness of statement Wernle is an excellent representative of the whole school; for what he asserts in set terms is really presupposed by a number of other writers who do not assert it. It remains for us to ask, Is this construction of the early history of Christianity tenable?

### *Two Preliminary Remarks.*

Before I attempt to answer this question, there are two remarks that I should like to make upon it.

i. We observe here, as in so many other cases, that the theory reflects, not so much the essential disposition and proportions of the facts as the state of the extant evidence. Hardly anything has come down to us from the early years, at least for the first three decades, of the Mother Church; and from that which has come down to us, the earlier chapters of the Acts and the Epistle of St. James, criticism would make considerable deductions. I think that these deductions are greater than ought to be made, but their existence cannot be ignored. What we know of the Mother Church has to be pieced together by inference and constructive imagination. On the other hand for St. Paul we have in any case an impressive body of certainly genuine epistles. It is natural enough that the mind should be dominated by these, and that the assumption should be made—for it is pure assumption

—that the leading ideas of these epistles are an original creation.

ii. But there is nothing really in the Epistles themselves to bear out this assumption. St. Paul does not write as though he were a wholesale innovator. He does not write as though he were founding a new religion. On the contrary, he lays great stress in a familiar passage (1 Cor. iii. 11) on the fact that the foundation is already laid. In another place (1 Cor. xv. 11) he speaks as though it made no difference whether he were the preacher or others, the belief of Christians was the same. St. Paul has indeed his special views and his special controversies, but they do not affect the main point. He assumes that this is common to all Christians.

This brings me to some of the points on which we have to test the theory, as it is stated by Wernle.

### 5. *Objections to the Critical Theory.*

Let us think for a moment what the theory involves. It involves that the Pauline Gospel not only conquered the West, but that it came flooding back in a great reflux-wave all over the East. The East, on this theory, has no power of resistance; it surrenders at discretion. How does this accord with the evidence?

i. In order that there should be this conquest and annexation of the whole Church by the Pauline Gospel it is implied, and it is of the essence of the theory to imply, that there was a broad and well-marked difference between this Pauline Gospel and

the general belief of the Church, more particularly of the Mother Church. But St. Paul himself expressly disclaims any such difference; he was anxious that there should not be any, and he took steps to guard against the possibility that serious divergence might have come between them unawares. He tells us that he compared notes with the leading apostles at Jerusalem, to make sure that he and they were preaching substantially the same thing: 'I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run in vain' (Gal. ii. 2). And again, at the end of the conferences, he tells us how James and Peter and John gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, as a pledge of their substantial agreement (ibid. ver. 9).

It is true that there were points of discussion, which in other sections of the Church amounted to controversy, between St. Paul and the Judaean Christians. But the Epistle to the Galatians allows us to see the full extent of these debatable matters; and, by defining them, it also defines the extent of the common ground of agreement. What we should call the doctrine of the Person of Christ certainly comes under the latter head, and not under the former. The Mother Church was not Ebionite, or St. Paul would have been in still sharper antagonism to it than he was.

ii. It was this substantial agreement between St. Paul and the leading Apostles that saved the Church from a formidable rupture. Such glimpses as we have of the Judaean churches do not at all give us the

impression that they would have submitted meekly to Pauline dictation. No doubt there was a considerable prejudice against St. Paul personally; but it was a prejudice that turned upon other things altogether than his teaching about Christ. We have in Acts xxi. 20–5 a graphic description, which is also full of verisimilitude, of the kind of ways in which St. Paul came into collision with the Jewish Christians; but his teaching about Christ was not one of them.

iii. We have seen that the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, was common ground for all Christians. It was on this ground that St. Paul and the Judaean churches felt themselves one. They also felt themselves one in what we ought not to call the doctrine of the Trinity, but in those root-facts out of which the doctrine of the Trinity afterwards came to be formulated. There was doubtless still room for variety of speculation. There was room for different interpretation of current terms and current beliefs. The doctrine of the Church had as yet a certain fluidity. St. Paul might take one line, and Cephas another, and Apollos a third. And yet Christ was not divided. There was a consciousness of union underlying these differences. There was a sense, that could not as yet be put adequately into words, of certain great facts, of certain fundamental beliefs, by virtue of which the Church was one.

iv. It is out of this common ground, and not out of the special features of the Pauline theology, that the teaching of the Fourth Gospel really sprang. True, there are resemblances and affinities between

details in the theologies of the Evangelist and the Apostle. But it does not follow that these were borrowed by the one from the other[1]. If they had been, we may be sure that there would have been clearer evidence of the fact. Somewhere in the group of Johannean writings there would have been a side-glance at St. Paul that we should have understood. As it is, the two great Apostolic cycles stand majestically apart. There may be a connexion between them, but it is a connexion in the main underground. There is no direct affiliation, but the parentage of both lies behind. Many a seed sprouted in the early years of the Pentecostal Church: but it was not this apostle or that who made them grow; the seeds were sown before Pentecost, and they had their watering and their growth and their increase from the same Hand.

It is true that we cannot give chapter and verse for all this. The books from which chapter and verse might have been taken were never written. Even in our own much-lettered age, how many a pregnant thought is there that is not caught and fixed in writing! And what sort of record should we have of the thought, say, of America or England for some fifteen years, if the chronicle of it were compressed into a single document of the length of the first twelve chapters of the Acts?

The best record of the thoughts that grew and fructified in those momentous early years is to be

[1] I do not of course mean to deny all influence of St. Paul upon St. John in the shaping or formulating of Christian ideas. But the ultimate origin of those ideas goes further back than to St. Paul.

found not in the Acts but in the Gospels; and the fact that it is to be sought there shows whence the impulse really came. It may seem a truism to maintain that Jesus Christ was the real Founder of Christianity, and that He founded it by what He was, and not by what men imagined Him to be. Of course to many Christians it will seem a truism to say this; the simple Christian never thought otherwise; but there are Christians who are not simple, and who may be encouraged to search with a closer scrutiny to see if the old account of the origin of Christianity is not the best, indeed the only account possible. The New Testament is scattered with hints, which are not more than hints, arrow-heads as it were pointing back to Christ. These are a profitable subject of study—none more profitable. If we pay attention to these hints, and if we look for the roots of St. Paul's teaching, I do not think we shall say that Christianity—the Christianity of nineteen centuries—was his invention, and that St. John did but follow in his train.

### 6. *Larger Objections.*

The kind of study that I have just been recommending is strictly critical; but the theory of which I have been speaking carries us out beyond the narrower ground of criticism into the wider field of history and teleology. I may just for a moment in conclusion touch on this. It may supply us with a warning that there is at least a strong presumption that the theory which fathers the teaching of St. John

upon that of St. Paul, and St. Paul's teaching upon itself, with no higher sanction behind, cannot well be true. Such a theory would mean that quite a half, and the most important half, of the fundamental theses of historical Christianity, were a mere human invention which those who have had the wit to discover them to be a human invention may go on to treat as nothing better,—to bestow on them perhaps a certain amount of praise in relation to their time, but to regard them as something that the world has outgrown. This is a view that in the present day, avowedly or unavowedly, is very largely taken. On this view there is a real nucleus of truth in biblical Christianity, but that nucleus in the light of modern science is seen to be very small indeed; all the rest is surplusage. The misfortune for the theory is that it is not only on the nucleus of truth, but very largely upon the surplusage, that nineteen centuries of Christians have lived.

Now I am quite prepared to believe that most great truths that do not come under the head of Mathematics or Physical Science have had a certain amount of surplusage attached to them; there has been husk and kernel, flower and sheath. I quite believe that men do

> 'rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.'

But I cannot help thinking that, on the theory of Wernle and his friends, the surplusage is too great, the dead self too large. The course of history, as this theory would describe it, seems to me contrary

to the analogy of what we otherwise know of the dealings of God with man. If we look, for instance, at the Old Testament, we see a gradual preparation for the coming of Christ, a gradual elevation and expansion of religious ideas, on the whole a nearer approximation to truth. All of us, critics and non-critics, would give substantially the same account of this; we should all of us at least see in it progress. But when we come to Christianity, Wernle and his friends see in it a far larger proportion of what is not progress but depravation and corruption, not the gradual expansion and purification of true ideas, but the wider dissemination of ideas that are false. There are nearly fourteen centuries of the dissemination of these false ideas; then comes a sudden spasmodic effort of partial relief; and at last, in the latter half of the nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries, there is some sort of approach to a rediscovery of truth. It seems to me difficult to describe this view of history as anything else than a systematic impeachment of Divine Providence.

I do not wish to press the point. As I have said, we have left behind the region of criticism, and entered upon another that is not only very wide but that some of you may think rather outside my subject. The Christian, it seems to me, ought to have a comprehensive view of the purpose of God in history; he ought to be able to adjust this to his fundamental beliefs. And I would only ask you to consider how far this can be done on the theory I have been discussing.

# LECTURE VIII

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE GOSPEL

### I. *Summary of the Internal Evidence.*

All our discussions have for their object, not the production of rounded and symmetrical theories but the ascertainment of truth. We must take the data as we find them. If they do not as they stand sustain a clear conclusion, we cannot make them do so. And it seems to me far better frankly to confess the fact than to strain the evidence one way or the other. We may state the case with such indications of leaning as we please, but always with the reservation that a slight change in the evidence, the discovery or recovery of a single new fact, might turn the scale.

This is, I think, the position of things in regard to some of the outlying parts of the problem of the Fourth Gospel. One broad conclusion seems to stand out from the evidence, internal as well as external. The author was an eye-witness, an Apostolic man—either in the wider sense of the word 'Apostle' or in the narrower. So much seems to me to be assured; but round that broad conclusion there arises a cluster of questions to which I cannot give a simple and categorical answer.

I will come back to these questions in a moment. But I ought perhaps first to remind you of the point to which the previous argument has brought us, and of the grounds on which the main proposition is based.

I take it to be a fundamental element in the question that in several places (especially xix. 35, xxi. 24; cf. i. 14, 1 John i. 1–3), the Gospel itself lays claim to first-hand authority. This is a different matter from ordinary pseudonymous writing. The direct and strong assertions that the Gospel makes are either true or they are a deliberate untruth. Between these alternatives I have no hesitation in choosing. I do not think that we should have the right to make so grave an imputation as that implied in the second on anything but the clearest necessity. But the first alternative appeared to me to be confirmed by a multitude of particulars: first, by a number of places in which the author of the Gospel seems to write from a standpoint within the Apostolic circle, or in which he gives expression to experiences like those of an Apostle; and secondly by the very marked extent to which the narrative of the Gospel corresponds in its details to the real conditions of the time and place in which its scene is laid, conditions which rapidly changed and passed away.

This constitutes the internal argument for the authentic character of the Gospel. It is met and, as I conceive, strongly corroborated by the nature of the external evidence.

## II. *The External Evidence.*

### 1. *The Position at the end of the Second Century.*

In regard to this I would not spend time in refinements upon some of the scanty details furnished by the scanty literature of the first half of the second century. I would rather take my stand on the state of things revealed to us on the lifting of the curtain for that scene of the Church's history which extends roughly from about the year 170 to 200. I would invite attention to the distribution of the evidence in this period: Irenaeus and the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, Heracleon in Italy, Tertullian at Carthage, Polycrates at Ephesus, Theophilus at Antioch, Tatian at Rome and in Syria, Clement at Alexandria. The strategical positions are occupied, one might say, all over the Empire. In the great majority of cases there is not a hint of dissent. On the contrary the four-fold Gospel is regarded for the most part as one and indivisible. Just in one small coterie at Rome objections are raised to the Fourth Gospel, not on the ground of any special and verifiable tradition, but from dislike of some who appeal to the Gospel and from internal criticism of which we can take the measure. Just at this period of which I am speaking these dissentients appear and disappear, leaving so little trace that (as we have seen) Eusebius, who is really a careful and candid person, and has ancients like Origen and

Clement behind him, can describe the Gospel as unquestioned both by his own generation and by preceding generations (p. 65 *supra*).

Let us for the moment treat these great outstanding testimonies as we should treat the reading of a group of MSS. The common archetype of authorities so wide apart and so independent of each other must go back very far indeed. If we were to construct a *stemma*, and draw lines from each of the authorities to a point *x*, representing the archetype, the lines would be long and their meeting-point would be near the date at which according to the tradition the Gospel must have been composed. A tradition of this kind, so wide-spread and so deep-rooted, could not have arisen if it had not had a very substantial ground. Suppose we allow for a moment that it is something in itself a little short of absolutely decisive, there comes in to reinforce it what we have just been speaking of as the result of internal criticism, that the Gospel is the work of an eye-witness, a member of the circle which immediately surrounded our Lord. That is also a position which seems to me very strong.

I submit that this is a much fairer statement of the case than that (e. g.) which we find in Schmiedel (*Enc. Bibl.* ii. 2550):

'Instead of the constantly repeated formula that an ancient writing is "attested" as early as by (let us say) Irenaeus, Tertullian, or Clement of Alexandria, there will have to be substituted the much more modest statement that its existence (not genuineness)

is attested only as late as by the writers named, and even this only if the quotations are undeniable or the title expressly mentioned.'

This is a characteristic example of the spirit in which the author writes—much more that of the lawyer speaking to his brief for the prosecution than of the scholar or historian. The criticism is couched in general terms: as far as it applies in particular to the Gospel of St. John the *caveat* is superfluous, because all the three writers named, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria bear witness expressly to the genuineness of the Gospel, and not only to its existence. The witness of Heracleon is still more important. To recognize a writing is one thing; to recognize it as sacred is another; to comment upon it as so sacred and authoritative that its contents can be interpreted allegorically is a third: and all this is so early as *c.* 170. But apart from this the whole form of the statement is unjust. It leaves entirely out of account the extreme scantiness of the material from which evidence could be drawn in the period before the year 180. To me the wonder is that the evidence borne to the New Testament writings in the extant literature prior to this date should be as much as it is and not as little.

### 2. *Earlier Evidence.*

But Dr. Schmiedel certainly understates that for the Fourth Gospel. He assumes that no trace can be found of this earlier than 140. A single

item of the evidence, which he does not notice, is enough to refute this. I refer to our present conclusion of the Gospel of St. Mark. We may say with confidence that its date is earlier than the year 140—whether we argue from the chronology of Aristion, its presumable author, or from its presence in the archetype of almost all extant MSS., or from the traces of it in writers so early as Justin and Irenaeus. But I may take it for granted that the added verses imply not only the existence but up to a certain point the authority of the Fourth Gospel.

But, besides this, Dr. Schmiedel assumes the negative results of an inquiry, which he has conducted very lightly, and the scale on which he was writing compelled him to conduct lightly, into the bearings of the literature older than 140. I am not so sure as he is that there is no allusion to the Gospel in Barnabas or Hermas, where it is found (e. g.) by Keim, or in the Elders of Papias, where it is found (e. g.) by Harnack. The questions raised in these cases are too complex and too delicate to be quite worth discussing from the point of view of that legal proof which for Schmiedel seems alone to have any value. But Ignatius and the *Didachê* are of more tangible importance. I am inclined to think that justice has rarely been done from this point of view to Ignatius. It is not so much a question of close coincidence in expression. There I should perhaps allow that Dr. Schmiedel is within his rights in denying what Dr. Drummond and Dr. Stanton affirm. The evidence of Ignatius is obscured by the fact that, unlike

Polycarp[1], he is not given to exact quotation. Polycarp is by far the weaker man; it is natural to him to express his thoughts in the words of others. But Ignatius has a rugged strength of mind which digests and assimilates all that comes to it, and if it reproduces the thoughts of others, does so in a form of its own[2]. But I do not think there can be any doubt that Ignatius has digested and assimilated to an extraordinary degree the teaching that we associate with the name of St. John. If any one questions this, I would refer him to the excellent monograph, *Ignatius von Antiochien als Christ und Theologe*, by Freiherr von der Goltz (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, Band xii). It will be best to give the conclusion to which this writer comes in his own words, as I agree with it largely but not quite entirely. He says:

'The question is whether Ignatius came to appropriate this world of thought through reading our Fourth Gospel, or whether he must be held to be an independent witness to this mode of thinking. Up to a certain point the preceding investigation has already shown that the latter is the case. Although, for instance, certain details might seem to point to borrowing from the Fourth Gospel, yet this peculiar religious Modalism, this mysticism, this combination and accentuation of the same points, this special form of faith in Christ, and, in general, this identical mode of thought and belief could not be simply transferred by

[1] See, however, the Oxford Society of Hist. Theol., *N. T. in Apost. Fathers* (1905), p. 84.

[2] Ibid., pp. 64, 67, 69; on the use of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 81–83 (a judicious estimate).

means of a book to one who had not in other ways taken up the same ideas and made them his own. There is also proof from various turns given to the thought, as from his use of an independent terminology, that the author is in possession of "Johannean" ideas as his own property. So that in case we really came to the result that Ignatius was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel, we should have indeed to refer to that acquaintance the portrait that he draws of Christ and some details, but in spite of that we should have to hold fast the conclusion that in appropriating his general conception of things, Ignatius must have come under the prolonged influence of a community itself influenced by Johannean thought' (p. 139).

It will have been observed that the reason for thinking that the affinity of thought between Ignatius and St. John is not to be explained by the use of a book, is not because of its slightness but because it is really too deep to be accounted for in that way. It is true that the affinity goes very deep. I had occasion a few years ago to study rather closely the Ignatian letters, and I was so much impressed by it as even to doubt whether there is any other instance of resemblance between a biblical and patristic book, that is really so close. Allowing for a certain crudity of expression in the later writer and remembering that he is a perfervid Syrian and not a Greek, he seems to me to reflect the Johannean teaching with extraordinary fidelity. This applies especially to his presentation of the doctrine of the Incarnation, to his conception of the Logos, and of the relation of Christ at once to the Father and to the believer. In the writers of the next generation to Ignatius

e. g. in Justin—the conception of the Logos is infected by Greek philosophy, giving to it more or less the sense of reason, whereas in Ignatius the leading idea is, as we have seen it to be in St. John, that of revelation. Nowhere else have we the idea of the fullness of Godhead revealed in Christ grasped and expressed with so much vigour. What difference there is is of the nature of exaggeration. It is not wrong to say that the language of Ignatius tends towards Modalism. But it is just because he has grasped ideas, for every one of which there are parallels in the Fourth Gospel, with so much intensity.

I can quite allow that Ignatius has so absorbed the teaching that we call St. John's as it were *in succum et sanguinem* that the relation cannot be adequately explained by the mere perusal of a book late on in life. There is something more in it than this. Von der Goltz would explain it by the hypothesis that Ignatius had resided for a considerable length of time in a 'Johannean' community like the churches of the province of Asia. There is however no hint of anything of the kind in the letters. It is I think Harnack who somewhere remarks that from the opening of the letter of Ignatius to Polycarp we should infer that the latter was a stranger to the writer.

It would be more natural to fall back on the tradition that Ignatius was an actual disciple of St. John. But this tradition appears first in the *Martyrium Colbertinum*; in other words there is no evidence for it before the fourth century. Indeed

Zahn has sketched in a plausible manner the process by which we may conceive it to have arisen[1]. Still there is ample room in the dark spaces of the lives both of Ignatius and of St. John for some more or less intimate connexion between them. The alternative seems to me to be, either to suppose something of this kind, or else to think that Ignatius had really had access to the Johannean writings years before the date of his journey to Rome, and that he had devoted to them no mere cursory reading but a close and careful study which had the deepest effect upon his mind.

If the Fourth Gospel was really the work of St. John, the chronology would leave quite sufficient room for this hypothesis. But in any case the phenomena of the Ignatian letters seem to me to prove the existence, well before the end of the first century, of a compact body of teaching like that which we find in the Fourth Gospel. For even Dr. Schmiedel, I suppose, would hardly wish us to invert the relationship, and to say that the Evangelist took his ideas from Ignatius. But if the substance of the Fourth Gospel existed before the end of the first century, that is surely a considerable step towards the belief that the Gospel existed in writing, and the other reasons that we have for thinking that it had been written are so far confirmed.

A smaller item of proof tending in the same direction is supplied by the *Didaché*. It is well-known that the very ancient Eucharistic prayer contained

[1] *Ignatius von Antiochien*, pp. 46 ff.

in that document has the remarkable phrase 'to make perfect in love,'—'Remember, Lord, Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love,' which it is natural to compare with 1 John iv. 17, 18; John xvii. 23. The coincidence cannot be wholly accidental, though the question must be left open whether the phrase comes directly from a writing or only circulated orally[1]. The problem is the same as that which has just met us in the case of Ignatius, though on a much smaller scale. As far as it goes, it helps to strengthen the conclusion that has just been drawn.

Between Ignatius and Irenaeus we have Papias, Justin, and the greater Gnostics. In view more particularly of the discussion by Schwartz, I think it may be said that Papias probably knew the Gospel and recognized it as an authority. That Justin also used it I think we may take as at the present time generally admitted; and from the extent to which he used it I do not think that any inference can be drawn. Professor Bacon complains that the suggestions which have been put forward to account for the somewhat sparing use which he makes of it are not satisfactory[2]. Probably they are not in the sense of carrying conviction that any one of them is right to the exclusion of others. There must always be this difficulty where we are quite in the dark, and where

[1] Strangely enough, the Oxford Society's committee do not mention this phrase, though it presents a stronger case than any of those on p. 31.

[2] *Hibbert Journal* i. 529.

the whole chapter of accidents is open before us. It is no doubt a sounder method to fall back with Dr. Drummond simply upon our ignorance[1]. But to say that the negative side of Justin's evidence in any sense cancels the positive seems to me untenable.

As to Basilides and Valentinus, though there remains in my own mind a slight degree of probability that they really used the Gospel, I admit that this probability is not of a kind that can be strongly asserted where it is challenged. At the same time I cannot think Schmiedel's hypothesis at all probable that 'the Fourth Gospel saw the light somewhere between A. D. 132 and A. D. 140[2], and that although it was not used by the founders of the great Gnostic schools, it was at once adopted by their disciples. This is an instance of the way in which Dr. Schmiedel and his friends, when they light upon a hypothesis that favours the negative side, content themselves with stating it, as if it must at once carry conviction; and form no mental picture of the conditions with a view to ascertain whether the hypothesis is or is not probable. We may be pretty sure that the Fourth Gospel did not come in surreptitiously in this way, like a thief over the wall, and at once obtain recognition without any examination of credentials.

I do not hesitate to say that this theory of the late origin of the Gospel is not one that will work, or bear to be consistently carried out. On the other

[1] *Character, &c.* 157. [2] *Hibbert Journal* ii. 610.

hand, if we assume the traditional view, all the evidence falls into line; we have an adequate cause for the authority which from the first attached to the Gospel; and, allowing for the scantiness and critical drawbacks of the materials from which our evidence is drawn, we have a picture quite as satisfactory as we can expect of its gradually expanding circulation.

So far, our course has been straightforward. The salient points stand out in orderly succession, and they all rest on solid foundations. But when we come to closer quarters, and try to reconstruct for ourselves the circumstances under which the Gospel was written, and which attended the first two or three decades of its history, the case is otherwise. Many questions may be raised that cannot be categorically answered. Bricks cannot be made without straw; and positive history cannot be written on the ground of mere surmises and possibilities. All I would contend for is that no valid argument can be brought from the facts as they stand against the Gospel; it is another matter, and will require longer time and perhaps further discoveries, before we can paint on the canvas of history a picture strictly harmonious and coherent in all its parts.

## III. *Unsolved Problems.*

### 1. *The relation of the Gospel to the Apocalypse.*

Of the questions that are still *sub judice* one of the most difficult is that of the relation of the Gospel

to the Apocalypse. The Apocalypse is a book on which criticism is very far from having said its last word. I should like to express myself about it with great reserve. But I do not think that in any case an argument can be drawn from it against the Gospel. I will quote two very unprejudiced opinions. Harnack writes as follows:—

'I confess my adhesion to the critical heresy which carries back the Apocalypse and the Gospel to a single author, always presupposing that the Apocalypse is the Christian working-up of a Jewish apocalypse (I should be prepared to say of several Jewish apocalypses—to me this seems beyond our power to unravel). I mark off the Christian portions very much as Vischer has done, and see in them the same spirit and the same hand which has presented us with the Gospel [1].

We remember that in Harnack's view the author is not the Apostle but the Presbyter.

And then Bousset, who has written the commentary on the Apocalypse in Meyer's series, though he does not go quite so far as Harnack, places the two works in close relation to each other. After a careful examination of the language of the Apocalypse he sums up thus:—

'It is certainly right when this Johannean colouring of the language is set down to the account of the last redactor of the Apocalypse (Harnack, Spitta). But here too it may be seen that this redactor has transformed the material before him more thoroughly than is commonly supposed. The linguistic parallels adduced seem to justify the supposition that the

[1] *Chronologie*, p. 675.

Apocalypse also proceeds from circles which stood under the influence of John of Asia Minor [1].'

There are many to whom these opinions will seem paradoxical, but there is much to be said for them. I quote them, however, only to show that the two problems must be worked out independently, and that they need not necessarily clash with one another.

### 2. *The date of Papias.*

The next question on which I will touch is the date of Papias, which has a subordinate but rather important bearing upon the group of questions with which he is connected.

I am by no means sure that the late date now commonly assigned to him is right (c. 145–60, Harnack). It turns upon a statement in De Boor's fragment, supposed to be made by Papias, that some of those who were raised from the dead by Christ lived till the time of Hadrian. A very similar statement is quoted by Eusebius from the *Apology of Quadratus* (*H. E.* iv. 3, 2). I suspect that there has been some confusion at work here. Experience shows that nothing is commoner than for the same story to be referred to different persons. In the case of Quadratus we have his own words in black and white, whereas the attribution to Papias is vague and may be only a slip of memory [2]. On the

[1] *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, p. 208.

[2] It is pointed out to me by Dr. V. Bartlet that the sentence in the Fragment about the dead raised to life is really a new statement not connected with the sentences preceding which are referred to Papias. I am inclined to think that this is right, and that the authority may be Quadratus.

other hand Irenaeus expressly calls Papias 'one of the ancients' (ἀρχαῖος ἀνήρ), a phrase that I do not think he would have used of a time so near his own as 145–60. Besides, when we look into the great passage, Eus. *H. E.* iii. 39, the standpoint appears to be that, at latest of the third generation, or more strictly where the second generation is passing into the third, if we suppose that Aristion and the Presbyter John were still alive. The natural date for the extracts in this chapter seems to me to be *circa* 100.

### 3. *The death of the Apostle John.*

De Boor's Fragment is more precise in its assertion, 'Papias, in his second book, says that John the divine (ὁ θεολόγος) and James his brother were slain by the Jews.' 'John the divine' is naturally questioned; it is defended by Schwartz, but may quite well be due to the fragmentist. The main arguments against the statement are the silence of the early writers, especially Eusebius, and the possibility of confusion between John the Baptist and John the Apostle, or between red martyrdom and white. No doubt this is one of the better examples of the argument from silence, and no doubt we must reckon with the possibility of mistake. Still I do not feel that the statement altogether loses its force. I said something about it in Lecture III; I will at present only add that supposing it were true, the language of Papias about the two Johns can be explained more satisfactorily.

4. *The son of Zebedee and the beloved disciple.*

I cannot disguise from myself that if the elder John really perished at an earlier stage in the history, the position of the younger becomes much clearer. There would then be no difficulty in the way of identifying him at once with the beloved disciple and with the author of the Gospel and Epistles. We should indeed have all the advantages of Harnack's theory without its disadvantages. We should not be compelled to attribute to the Ephesian Church any fraudulent intention or practice. We should only have to regard the younger John as succeeding in a manner to the place of the elder, much (as I said) in the way that James the brother of the Lord succeeded to the place of the elder James.

I do not wish to prejudge the question. But those who are familiar with its intricacies will, I think, agree with me that it would be a real gain to have only one claimant to the Ephesian tradition [1].

[1] Since this was written I have had the advantage of seeing in manuscript an argument by Dom John Chapman, presenting in a more attractive shape than I have ever yet seen the view that the only John of Ephesus was the son of Zebedee. All depends upon the truth of the story of this Apostle's death. It is one of those statements that we can neither wholly trust, nor wholly distrust. There is a real chance that it may be right, and there is an equally real chance that it may be wrong; the evidence, as it seems to me, does not warrant a positive assertion either way. I should be much inclined to think that, if the statement is true, there was but one John at Ephesus, the beloved disciple who was also the Presbyter; and, if the statement is false, there was still but one John, who was both Presbyter and Apostle. But then there comes in the problem of the Apocalypse, which *may* require two Johns!

### 5. *John of Ephesus and his Gospel.*

We must in any case think of John of Ephesus as 'the aged disciple,' for to our modern ears some such double name as that expresses most adequately the feeling that surrounded him. He called himself by preference ὁ πρεσβύτερος, but we have unfortunately no sufficient rendering for this in English. 'Elder' and 'Presbyter' have both contracted the associations of office, and of a rather formal kind of office that has lost too much of its original meaning, for the natural authority of age was at first always conveyed in it. I suppose that the Apostle thought of himself most of all as a memory — the last and strongest link with those wonderful years. It was this especially that gave him his sense at once of dignity and of responsibility. When his disciples spoke of ὁ πρεσβύτερος, I imagine that they meant, as we might say, 'the Venerable'; they looked up to him with a feeling of awe tempered with affection.

It was at Ephesus, the capital of Proconsular Asia, that he whom we too may call 'the Venerable' held his modest court, and from thence that he went on circuit, organizing and visiting the little congregations formed in the cities and greater towns of the province. We have a glimpse of these activities in the famous story of the Robber Chief. We are more concerned with the contemplative side of his life, with that inward retrospect which occupied his mind. I do not doubt that it is true that the other Gospels, as they came into circulation among the churches, were

brought to him, and that he expressed his approval of them. The story makes him speak with unique authority, which has about it however nothing artificial, but is just the natural deference for one who of all men living was in the best position to know the things of which he spoke. His approval of the other Gospels was calm and objective, but critical. I believe that the precious statements that Papias has preserved for us about the compositions of St. Mark and St. Matthew are really fragments of his criticism. I accept also as literally true the story that it was partly because he felt that there was something wanting in the older records, and partly because of the urgency of those around him, that the old man at last was himself impelled to write. Browning's 'Death in the Desert' presents him at a later stage—at the last stage of all—but as an imaginative reproduction of the circumstances and frame of mind in which the Gospel was written, it is the best that I know.

At Ephesus in Asia the embers of the apostolic age glowed longer than elsewhere; and we cannot wonder that here the torch should be lit which was to be handed on to later times. If the devotion of disciples had to do with the writing of the Gospel, we may be sure that it also had to do with the commending and spreading of the Gospel when written. It is possible enough that they were the first to give it the name of 'the spiritual Gospel.' As such it passed from hand to hand; and again it is not surprising that those who prided themselves on superior spirituality and insight, like the Gnostics, showed a special fond-

ness for this Gospel, as we are told they did [1]. Neither is it any more surprising that in an opposite quarter, where a spirit like that of our own Hanoverian Bishops looked with jealousy upon every outbreak of enthusiasm, there should be a movement of reaction against the Gospel which seemed to encourage such manifestations (the Alogi). The catholic Church went calmly on its way, and these partialities and inequalities soon found their level. By the time of Irenaeus there is a stable equilibrium; no one of the four Gospels is either before or after another. And this is really the lesson taught by the Muratorian Fragment, though the writer has to speak a little more apologetically—there are, it is true, differences, but all are inspired by the self-same Spirit.

The last trace in ancient times of the preference which from its birth had been given to the Fourth Gospel appears, as we might expect, in Origen. After describing in detail the different purposes which dominated the other Gospels, Origen explains that Providence reserved for him who had leaned upon the breast of Jesus the greater and more mature discourse about Him, for none of the others had set forth His deity so unreservedly as John.

'So then we make bold to say that of all the Scriptures the Gospels are the firstfruits, and the firstfruits of the Gospels is that according to John the meaning whereof none can apprehend who has not leaned upon the breast of Jesus, or received at the hands of Jesus Mary to be his mother too [2].'

[1] Iren. *adv. Haer.* iii. 11. 7.

[2] *Comm. in Joan.* i. 6.

This is the kind of history that the extant materials and tradition sketch for us of the origin and early fortunes of the Fourth Gospel. From the moment that we leave behind the shade of obscurity which does just linger over the person of the author, everything seems to me quite consistent and coherent and natural and probable. Can we say as much of the opposition to the Gospel, especially in its extremer form, as represented by Schmiedel or Jean Réville or Loisy? We certainly cannot give the epithets just used to the theory of these writers, because there is really nothing to apply to them; the Gospel is for them a great *ignotum*, and nothing more. Is not this in itself a rather serious objection? As an *ignotum* the Gospel is really too great to plant down in the middle of the history of the second century without creating a disturbance of all the surrounding conditions which we may be sure would have lasted for years. Imagine this solid mass suddenly thrust into the course of events, as Schmiedel would say, somewhere about the year 140, between Basilides and Valentinus and their disciples, as it were under the very eyes of Polycarp and Anicetus and Justin and Tatian, without making so much as a ripple upon the surface. Of course nothing can be simpler than to say that the author of the Gospel is unknown; but the moment we come to close quarters with the statement, and realize what it means, we perceive its difficulty.

*Epilogue on the Principles of Criticism.*

And now that we have come to the end of this brief sketch of the history of the Gospel for the first hundred years or so of its existence, I may perhaps turn in conclusion to the other object which has been present to my mind throughout this course of lectures, and attempt to collect and state, also in the most summary form, some of the underlying principles of criticism which have from time to time found expression in the lectures and which I desire to submit for your consideration, more especially where they differ from much current practice. I consider them to be self-evident; but their obviousness has at least not prevented them from being too often disregarded. The main points would, I think, be as follows:—

1. In judging of the external evidence for any ancient writing, it is always important to observe not only the details of the evidence itself (date, genuineness, authority, freedom from ambiguity, the precise point attested), but also the extent of the area from which it is drawn and the proportion which it bears to the extant literature of the period which it covers. The first step should be an attempt to realize by an effort of the imagination the proportion between (1) the whole of the extant evidence, (2) the amount of the material that yields this evidence, (3) the amount of the material, once extant but now no longer extant, which might have contributed evidence if we had it. In other words, what we have to consider is not only

the actual, positive evidence available, but the distribution of this evidence and its relation to the real lie of the facts—no longer accessible to us but as they may be imaginatively reconstructed.

2. In particular, when use is made of the argument from silence, the first question to be asked is, What is silent? It may well be that the literature supposed to be silent is so small that no inference of any value can be drawn from it.

3. In any further use of the argument from silence full allowance should be made for common human infirmity in the persons who are silent—for oversight forgetfulness, limited range of thought. It is always desirable that the application of the argument from silence should be checked by comparison with verifiable examples from actual experience, whether that experience is derived from ancient life or from modern.

4. The presumption is that plain statements of fact may be trusted, unless there is a distinct and solid reason to the contrary. Even where there is a considerable interval of time between the fact and the statement, it may be presumed that the writer who makes the statement had connecting links of testimony to which he had access and we have not. In any case it is worth while to ask ourselves whether it is not probable that such connecting links existed.

5. In such plain statements the presumption further is that the writer meant what he says, or appears to say. Not until this apparent sense has proved wholly unworkable is it right to tamper with his express language, whether by emendation of the text or

putting upon his words a sense that is not obvious and natural.

6. The imputation of conscious deception or fraud is to be strongly deprecated, except with writers of ascertained bad character, and even then the imputation should not be made without substantial reason.

7. All imputations of motive, and especially of sinister motive, should be carefully weighed, and it should in particular be considered whether the supposed motive is one that was likely to be in operation under the historical conditions of the time and circumstances of the writer affected.

8. It should never be forgotten that human nature is a very subtle and complex thing—usually far more subtle and complex than any picture of it that we are likely to form for ourselves. Hence it is improbable that the enumeration of motives by the critical historian will really exhaust the possibilities of the case. Many seeming inconsistencies, whether of character or of statement, are really less than they seem, and quite capable of conjunction in the same person.

9. Where a simple cause suffices to explain a group, especially a large group, of facts, it is better not to assume a cause that is highly exceptional and complicated. This rule seems to apply to the indications of an eye-witness in the Fourth Gospel.

10. Such indications do not in the least exclude the natural effect of lapse of time and the unconscious action of experience and reflection on the mind of a writer who sets down late in life a narrative of events that had happened long before.

11. In studying a narrative of this kind we should bear in mind, as well as we can, the whole career of the writer: we should divide it into its successive stages, and we should be constantly asking ourselves which stage of his experience is reflected in the shape that each portion of the narrative takes. If the conception which results as a whole appears to be such as naturally starts from direct contact with the facts, that will supply us with a much easier explanation than any which involves the wholesale use of fiction.

12. There are different kinds of portraiture; and it does not at all follow that a portrait to be real must be full of movement and action. There are some minds that, from peculiarity of mental habit, although they preserve what they once saw or heard with great distinctness and fidelity, nevertheless easily travel away from these recollections of observed fact and glide into a train of reflection which is almost soliloquy. The author of the Fourth Gospel appears to be a writer of this kind.

13. He himself lays so much stress upon ocular testimony that we must give him credit for such testimony, even where it is not altogether easy for us to follow him.

14. This applies particularly to his reports of miracle. But in judging of these reports, we must before all things bear in mind that the personal disciples of Jesus and the whole first generation of Christians certainly believed that they were living in the midst of miracle, and certainly held that belief

to be an important constituent in their conception of Christ.

15. If we would form an adequate idea of what we call 'the supernatural' in the dealings of God with men, we must not begin by ruling out all that transcends our common experience. We must keep it in our minds even where we feel that there are features of it that we do but imperfectly understand. More light may be given to us by degrees.

16. All our Gospels together present us with a view of the life and words of Christ to which, if we did but know it, there would be much to be added. The first Christians were acquainted with many particulars under both heads which to us are entirely lost. These particulars contributed in an important degree to the total impression which they formed of the Person of Christ.

17. The conception was naturally fullest and most adequate in the Mother Church, i. e. in the Church in which the immediate followers of Christ were for the longest time collected. It was here, and nowhere else, that that conception of His Person was formed which dominated all parts of the Church, and which carried with it certain corollaries as to the nature of God and his dealings with men that became a permanent body of belief.

18. St. Paul no doubt developed certain portions and aspects of this body of belief, but it is quite impossible and contrary to the evidence that he can have invented its main propositions.

19. We may be sure that St. John did not draw

directly from St. Paul, but, firstly, from his own recollections, and in the second place, from the store of common memories and common doctrine that was the possession of all Christians and especially of those who had been nearest to the Master.

20. If we attempt a reconstruction of the main lines of the progress of the Church in the early and in subsequent centuries, such reconstruction ought to be worthy of its subject. In other words, it ought to be one in which we can really see the finger of God.

21. The workings of Divine Providence, as we have experience of them, do not indeed always correspond to what we should antecedently expect. They are such as belong to a world, not of perfect, but of imperfect beings. The Divine purpose as we see it, does not take effect at once, but by slow and gradually expanding degrees.

22. In a world so mixed and chequered progress also has been mixed and chequered; it has not been exactly what we, with our limited faculties, could at once recognize as ideal. It has been progress by tentative experiment, by gradual formulation, by description, at first rough and approximate, but improved little by little as time went on. Any reconstruction of Christian history which agrees with these broad conditions is legitimate, I mean, any reconstruction which recognizes the tentative, experimental, imperfect but gradually improved formulation of Christian belief. It is incumbent upon us, in our own day, to take our part in the attempt to formulate our conceptions of truth, whether historical or

doctrinal, with all the accuracy in our power; and we may be quite sure that future generations will improve upon anything that we leave behind us.

23. Any method of reconstructing history on these lines is, as I have stated, legitimate and worthy of a Christian who is loyal to his faith. But a view of history that cannot be expressed in terms fit to describe the operation of Divine Providence; that sees in it nothing but huge blunders and gross deteriorations; that regards the Church of Christ as built on fundamental untruth, which only becomes worse and not better as the centuries advance; such a view seems to me to be not loyal and not really Christian.

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